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The creation of competitive cities in South Africa: the case of the West Rand vision 2016

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**THE CREATION OF COMPETITIVE CITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF
THE WEST RAND VISION 2016**

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Development Planning.

Johannesburg, 2014

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own original and independent work. This research report has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Science in Development Planning at the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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ABSTRACT

The advent of democracy opened avenues for South Africa's integration into the global economy. The international influences of governance and political economy have since transcended into the South African public management and its economic policies. The implications of this approach have led to the transformation of the local government sphere as an interfacing agent for service delivery, economic development and promoting democracy. Therefore, consolidation of municipalities towards becoming competitive cities lies on the justification that amalgamation can yield improvement in service delivery, redressing socio-economic and spatial disparities as well as improving economic growth.

Using the West Rand district case study, it emerges that competitive cities require certain features of competitiveness ranging from sound infrastructure development, inclination to innovation, efficient governance, the ability to attract relevant labour, indigenous markets and the quality of life. However, the upsurge of creating competitive cities in South Africa are not purely for economic reasons but also political and developmental. Against these features, the West Rand district possesses strategic strengths in natural endowments, governance, and a potential human capital. However, an innovation agenda for varied economic sectors, information technology and in building strategic networks must be heightened in order to meet the long term vision.

The consideration of planning theories is incorporated in the findings to assist the process of creating a competitive city in West Rand as envisioned. Collaborative planning theory can be useful in building consensus and bringing on board the marginalised groups into decision making. Equity planning theory is considered as a guide for implementing redistributive justice as one of the objectives for amalgamation. The spatial reform towards a competitive region is facilitated through strategic spatial planning approach that upholds the democratic principles in forward spatial planning and also provide clear implementation phases that can be periodically reviewed.

The analysis leads to the conclusion that the amalgamation process is geared towards establishing a competitive West Rand region as a means of galvanising economic growth. However, the realities of service delivery challenges and fragile economic base lead to the conclusion that the mergers are also with the aim of social justice and for redistributive developmental agenda.

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To my adorable daughter Aphile Majola, this is for you. I hope that my zeal and unwavering dedication to completing my studies will inspire you in the course of your own life – to stay committed to the goals you have set for yourself.

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To my parents Mr Mandlenkosi and Mrs Nomakhosi Thwala – my legends, I thank you for breaking the barriers of being born black in South Africa and instilling the value of education. I’m thankful to my siblings for also being my support base and seeing me through the worst and best of times of my life. eMsinga, eMzweni kwaBhaza – the stony mountains, the Ndaka River and the ululation of women and the chanting of male regiments, the discipline yakwa Thwala, amaNyamande is all embedded in me. I am of my people.

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I have total praise for the Almighty for all the marvels, the provision, protection and seeing me through this vision, though the enemy is ever ready to strike. (Habakkuk 2:3)

List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa
CBD	Central Business District
COPE	Congress of the People
DA	Democratic Alliance
DLG&H	Department of Local Government and Housing
GCIS	Government Communication and Information Systems
GCR	Gauteng City Region
GCRO	Gauteng City Region Observatory
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
GPDS	Gauteng Provincial Development Strategy
GVA	Gross Value Add
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MMC	Member of the Mayoral Committee
MSA	Municipal Systems Act of 2000
NSDP	National Spatial Development Perspective
PUR	Polycentrism
R/ SDFs	Regional/ Spatial Development Framework
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SMS	Short Message System
TCC	Trans-National Capitalist Class
TNCs	Trans-National Culture
TNPs	Trans-National Practices
VF+	Freedom Front Plus
WCY	World Competitive Yearbook
WRDM	West Rand District Municipality
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

1. The Creation of Competitive Cities - Setting the Scene

It is commonly stated that the advent of competitive cities has created certain niches on which localities can maximise their economies of scale in order to yield economic growth. Scholars such as Richardson (1969) and Anholt (2007), from the regional economics field, argue that cities contribute to the economic viability of a region through their economic comparative attributes. Budd and Hirmis (2004) point out that there are common attributes of competitive cities. They elaborate that competitive cities demand high-skilled labour and job creation that is associated with high incomes. The authors also add that cities need to be innovative and possess sophisticated technologies in order to demonstrate upward mobility in the urban hierarchy. Furthermore, there is a view that competitive cities need to produce specialised goods and services within their local scales in order to meet demand internally and externally.

Webster and Muller (2000) state that a competitive city should produce and market a set of products (goods and services) that represent good value (not necessarily lowest price) in relation to comparable products of other urban regions. They point out those non-profitable commodities, such as local services, are part of the competitiveness equation. The authors also indicate that an urban economy that is competitive will produce goods and services of high value relative to price, supporting the export economy of the city, as well as directly raising the quality of life for people living in the urban region.

Roberts and Choe (2011) are Australian scholars who give an analysis on the competitiveness of Asian cities by demonstrating that competitive cities are having a significant contribution towards the nations' Growth Domestic Product. They point out that cities contribute more than 90% of GDP in Malaysia and Thailand, and close to 100% in Singapore and Hong Kong, China, due to their strong, highly competitive, and resilient economies. Even in countries with low urbanisation rates, such as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, more than 65% of GDP is produced in the urban areas.

According to the World Competitive Yearbook of 2011, published by the World Economic Forum (2011) in Switzerland, South Africa ranks 50th on the list of 142 countries in the

competitiveness outlook. The report highlights the four thematic areas on which countries are assessed, namely on government efficiency, business efficiency, economic performance and infrastructure. An analysis of the WCY published in the October issue of the Leader Newsletter of Productivity South Africa (2011), indicates that South African performance in these indicators has dropped. Mr Sello Mosai, an Executive Manager of Productivity SA, elaborates in the article that South Africa has dropped down in government inefficiency indicator. He stated that South Africa is being compared with the emerging economies like Brazil, Russia, India and China – BRICS. In his view, the results are a confirmation of socio-economic inequalities and a need to robustly increase the productive activities, thus increasing the competitiveness of South African economy.

Knox and Taylor (1995) also give a perspective of competitive cities which are characterised by powerful centres of economic and cultural authority. They attest that cities are the centres of specialisation for production of goods and services, and they must remain distinct from each other. This not only in terms of their role at regional level, but also by setting conditions for local socio-economic, spatial location and political structures. Such a global shift has filtered down to local cities to require adjustments in the municipal planning processes. Thornley (1999) argues that urban plans in many major cities throughout the world have become increasingly oriented towards promoting the city's competitive advantage. He elaborates that strategic land use plans during the 1990s have often been seen as tools to implement particular visions for the future of cities and linked to a particular rhetoric of economic change. In South Africa, this point is supported by the various strategic planning documents such as the National Development Plan (NDP), the Gauteng Provincial Development Strategy and the Integrated Development Planning (IDPs) - all of which indicate an orientation to futuristic growth of urban areas spatially and institutionally, with a glaring emphasis on motivating competitiveness.

According to the South African Cities Network (2012), each South African city is based on distinctive characteristics that attract certain events, drive key economic activities and have unique attractions that, when put together, make a significant contribution to the South African economy. In the same vein, the Gauteng province has produced a strategic vision known as Gauteng Vision 2055 wherein cities like Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni and the local districts are respectively aligned with the long term Growth and Development strategies of the vision. According to the Gauteng Vision Draft Discussion Document (2012),

the vision statement takes into account the positioning of the province not only as a competitive region in Africa, but as an important player in the global economy. It envisions Gauteng as a 'City Region' with an agglomeration of metropolitan cities. It entails the projection of the growth of cities in terms of human development, expansion of information technology to infrastructure development.

The Premier of Gauteng, Ms Nomvula Mankonyane has stated that the Gauteng government is working towards the creation of new cities and is planning a 'single local government system' to manage their services. She emphasised that the four big metros of the province would absorb all surrounding district municipalities by 2055, during the official launch of the discussion document and public participation campaign in May 2012 (South African Government Information: 2012). This has already been witnessed through the merging of the former politically and financially troubled Metsweding District with Tshwane Metro – subsequently called the Greater Tshwane Metro (The Greater Tswane Metro: 2012). According to Greenberg (2010), the justification for this merger arises from rescuing the financially unstable local authorities, so that by rationalising local government administration it can yield better revenue resources, speed up service delivery and promote viable economies of scale.

Similarly, in 2011, the West Rand District municipality has taken a political decision to reposition itself as a 'Unicity' – a term used in the Unicity Vision 2016 to describe the merging of the local authorities to form a metro in 2016. The transformation is in line with the Gauteng vision of 2055, and it marks a move towards the district positioning itself as a competitive city with comparative advantages in the Gauteng region. It is stated in the District vision statement, "...this vision entails the dissolving of the four local municipalities with the district, into a single municipality by 2016" (West Rand IDP: 2012).

1.1. The Problem Statement for the West Rand District Municipality

The West Rand District Municipality has begun the amalgamation process that envisages the dissolution of all its four local municipalities, namely Randfontein, Mogale City, Westonaria and Merafong into a single-tier Unicity entity. At the helm of political leadership is the Executive Mayor Councillor Mpho Nawa, who has outlined in his 2012 *State of the District Address* (2012) the objectives and the processes that need to be taken in achieving this vision. In essence, the transformation process entails the integration and alignment of line business

functions under a single executive and legislative authority. However, there is a sense of scepticism raised by Mr Kevin Allan, a Managing Director for Municipal IQ, which is a private institution that deals with municipal research. In the *Business Day* newspaper (22/02/2012), Mr Allan indicates that it is difficult to predict how the single metro system would work. Although he remains hopeful that metros have more resources, he is concerned that people who live in larger cities could have less say in the issues affecting them. Allan's concern points to the difficulties of managing issues of governance in a bigger constituency and the challenges that may arise in providing efficient service delivery for a larger population.

Allan's concerns are pertinent in the district because full participation of the citizenry is crucial in order to reach a consensus and legitimacy towards the implementation process. In connection with participation, Church and Reid (1996) have highlighted the issues of legitimacy and power relations in the British context. The authors write that there have been concerns over the accountability of new local agencies in general. They stress that the process of reaching a goal of being a competitive city requires a democratic process. They warn that adverse consequences can occur where the processes are exclusivist and selective, with power being concentrated in small bureaucratic groups.

According to the West Rand district, public participation is an integral element for the success of the plan (WRDM: 2012). However, it is not clear how the West Rand District is faced with concerns that are common in similar cases of amalgamation of smaller local authorities. The analysis about consolidation of municipal boundaries by Gordon and Richardson (1997) is that such challenges of compromised democratic processes are characterised by the ceding of political power, discerning issues about representation of constituencies, and the legitimacy of the bureaucratic processes at a local scale. As the four local municipalities, namely Westonaria, Mogale, Merafong and Randfontein all intend to merge into one 'Unicity' – the extent to which the communities have been involved and influenced this transformative agenda still remains to be seen.

The concern with participation processes arises from differing views from the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the current ruling party– the African National Congress (ANC) (Business Day 22/02/2011). The DA argues that the merger crusade is merely the ANC's attempt to deal with its internal political challenges, suggesting that the merger is motivated by hidden

factors other than economic and efficient service delivery objectives. The differing views also reveal antagonism and disgruntlement from other political parties which imply that the changes in the municipal governance of the district may not serve their interests.

It has been observed that, when differing views are linked with municipal re-demarcation processes, they tend to be highly contested politically and can be coupled with violence. The reported case in the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper (2008) of Merafong Local Municipality is an example wherein the members of the community were contesting the decision to demarcate their municipal boundaries. The members of the community challenged the decision to incorporate a part of the local municipality into the North West province instead of remaining in Gauteng at the Constitutional Court against the provincial governments' decision. The points of discontent were largely about the lack of public consultation [in the demarcation process] with fears of being subjected to sub-standard public services if they were moved to the North West.

As the West Rand District has set up a new organisational design and has set in motion the transformation dialogues, it is questionable as to how the coordination process unfolds. In terms of processes, the West Rand Vision 2016 Strategic Review Framework (2011) indicates that the structures such as the interim transformation committees have been established in order to oversee the coordination of their portfolios. Nonetheless, the process needs to be explored to ascertain whether the transformation process does meet the objectives and rationale of the proposed internal structures as well as the human experience of the work force.

Although it is widely known that governments have shifted from the centralised form of government to decentralising power and enhancing accountability, as well as transparency (Heller:2001), this proposed model prompts the question of whether we are seeing the reverse of this democratic process. The merger suggests a form of centralisation of power that is heavily bureaucratic and stands to minimise the reach into grassroots constituencies. The question then becomes: what are the mechanisms to ensure that the creation of competitive cities does not regress back to past mistakes of centralisation while optimising the gains?

In his chapter, Mabin (2006) wrote in the collection of articles on *Democracy and Delivery* and outlines the South African issues that are related to city government. He elaborately

details that from the transitional times, the debate to date has been about adopting the single, or dual, approach to metro government. The controversy raised in this debate is whether the cities can be locally responsive and what is meant by local democracy. The presumptions he finds are that the definition of local government is changing across the world. He finds that cities, instead of being in the traditional confines of local terrains, are now players in sub-national and even supra-national scales. Therefore, a process of amalgamation in the West Rand is confirmation that local government is moving towards consolidation of geographic spaces with the aim of attaining strategic economic and political power.

Also, local governments' developmental agenda, as articulated in the 1998 Local Government White Paper, is defined to be about maximising socio-economic development and ensuring democracy, as well as the sustainable delivery of basic services (The White Paper on Local Government: 1998). The assumption is that the mergers of local authorities encourage viable economies of scale, translating to the ability of the local authorities to advance their development plans in an equitable manner. To support this point, a study aimed at assessing the efficiency of service delivery in the American competitive cities found relative improvements in eleven municipal service delivery outputs such as water services, maintenance, police services and solid waste management, to name a few (Moore, *et al*, 2001). According to the authors, such improvements were also largely dependent on efficient factors such as leadership, municipal revenue, the population and levels of employment. The West Rand Unicity is, therefore, dependant on several factors of efficiency in order to address the service delivery inadequacies such as those noted above.

The structural transformation and function of the city authorities lead to the transformation of the political discourse in the local governance. Jonas and Ward (2007) point out that the significant shift in the urban politics is largely attributed to the redefinition of space, place and scales. They argue that the creation of competitive cities often give rise to the struggles around the material conditions of city-regional growth as processes of uneven development work their way through actual geographic contexts. They argue that the objective of creating competitive cities is often self-contradictory, due to the principles of innovation and knowledge-based economy perpetually leading to the exclusion of the masses who are not 'tailored' for the new economic mainstream. It is from this background that a case study requires an exploration of some critical issues pertaining to governance, public participation,

the transformation of the local governments' function and the pursuit of economic development at a local scale.

1.2. Research Questions and Purpose of the Study

The research question is: **What are the implications of creating Competitive Cities in South Africa?** The purpose of this research is to analyse the general understanding of what constitutes the creation of competitive cities and explore how this process has taken shape in the South African context. The research seeks to critically analyse the development processes of reaching this goal in the West Rand District as a case study. The overall intention is to analyse the key objectives of Vision 2016 Strategic Framework through the lenses of creating a competitive city while exploring the structures and processes that drive it. The research analyses the critical factors and elements that determine a successful formation of a competitive city in the district. Furthermore, as the process begins to take momentum in transforming the West Rand into a Unicity, the research aims to critically assess the democratic processes involved in the district.

In order to explore this question, a number of sub-questions are raised. These include:

- What are the motivating factors for adopting the West Rand Vision 2016?
- What are the requirements for establishing a competitive city as an approach to development?
- To what extent is the local citizenry involved in the planning processes towards establishing a competitive city?
- What processes and systems are put in place by local authorities to advance the competitive city approach?
- How is this approach benefiting the local communities?
- How is this approach advancing the local government developmental agenda?
- How can development planning contribute towards the creation of competitive cities in the South African context?

1.3. Rationale of the Research

Mabin (2006) persuasively indicates that the creation of competitive cities and 'unicities' is a contemporary South African phenomenon in urban planning, having emerged since the democratic transition of the 1990s. He points out that there has been a trend of amalgamation

of local authorities to form ‘city governments’. He adds that the South African cities have become ‘the theatre of contest over local government’. The points raised by Mabin are an indication of the need to further explore the emerging issues and trends as highlighted in the problem statement. This research proposal is relevant to the discourse relating to the characteristics, emerging dynamics, structures, and processes of creating competitive cities.

Therefore, this research is a contribution to the debate around the evolution of the local government in the contemporary period of global economy. The research is important in the observation of the processes and structures that are put in place in order to steer the change towards more singular, and less boundary, fixated local authorities. The research seeks to present lessons drawn from the analysis of factors and dynamics that come into play in the determination of successful and sustainable competitive cities. The objectives are clearly to produce findings that can lead to substantiated recommendations, not only to the development planning practitioners, but to other interested parties that may contend, or advocate, for the competitive cities approach.

1.4. Research Methods for the Study

For the purpose of this research, the qualitative research methods were used as a way to investigate the research questions. Ackroyd and Hughes (1992) argue that it is the nature of the research problem in this case that should inform the appropriate research method. The nature of the research problem requires normative perspectives, hence the qualitative method is applied. The qualitative research relies on four major approaches for researchers in order to gather data: library research, content analysis, case study, in-depth interviews, maps, and photographs

1.4.1. Library research

The library research is based broadly on academic books that cover the literature review in search of concepts and theories around competitiveness, competitive cities, neoliberalism, globalisation, comparative advantages and unicities, in both local and international context. The journals are used to derive content on the theories and concepts, as well as how they have been applied elsewhere. They will be used to further enhance the policy analysis. Newspaper clips, internet sources and past theses are sourced from the library to solicit information for defining the terms, locating the theoretical framework and debates about the creation of competitive cities. This is secondary literature used to provide the context and the

background about city planning in South Africa, as well as various models that have been used to explore matters of local government.

1.4.2. Content Analysis - Policy / Strategy documents

Beyond general library materials, a method of content analysis used to analyse written and verbal inferences. By broad definition, Krippendorff (2005) outlines that content analysis refers to any technique that is used to make inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages. The primary objective of content analysis is to provide support and bring persuasion for an argument by presenting oral or written evidence relating to the point. Analysis can be done by deducing themes, patterns and describing situations. The content analysis involved in this research entails the investigation of the guiding frameworks such as the Gauteng City Region, Gauteng Vision 2055 and the West Rand Unicity Vision 2016.

The data is variably sourced from the councils, through the municipal website, from newspapers, as well as other items of significance. Content analysis is used, therefore, as a technique of qualitative research to point out the indicators that can demonstrate the processes that have taken place, as well as to read the moods and events that are associated with the West Rand transformative agenda. Furthermore, it is applied to demonstrate the benefits of using competitiveness approaches through service delivery provision, economic opportunities and competitiveness of the unicity.

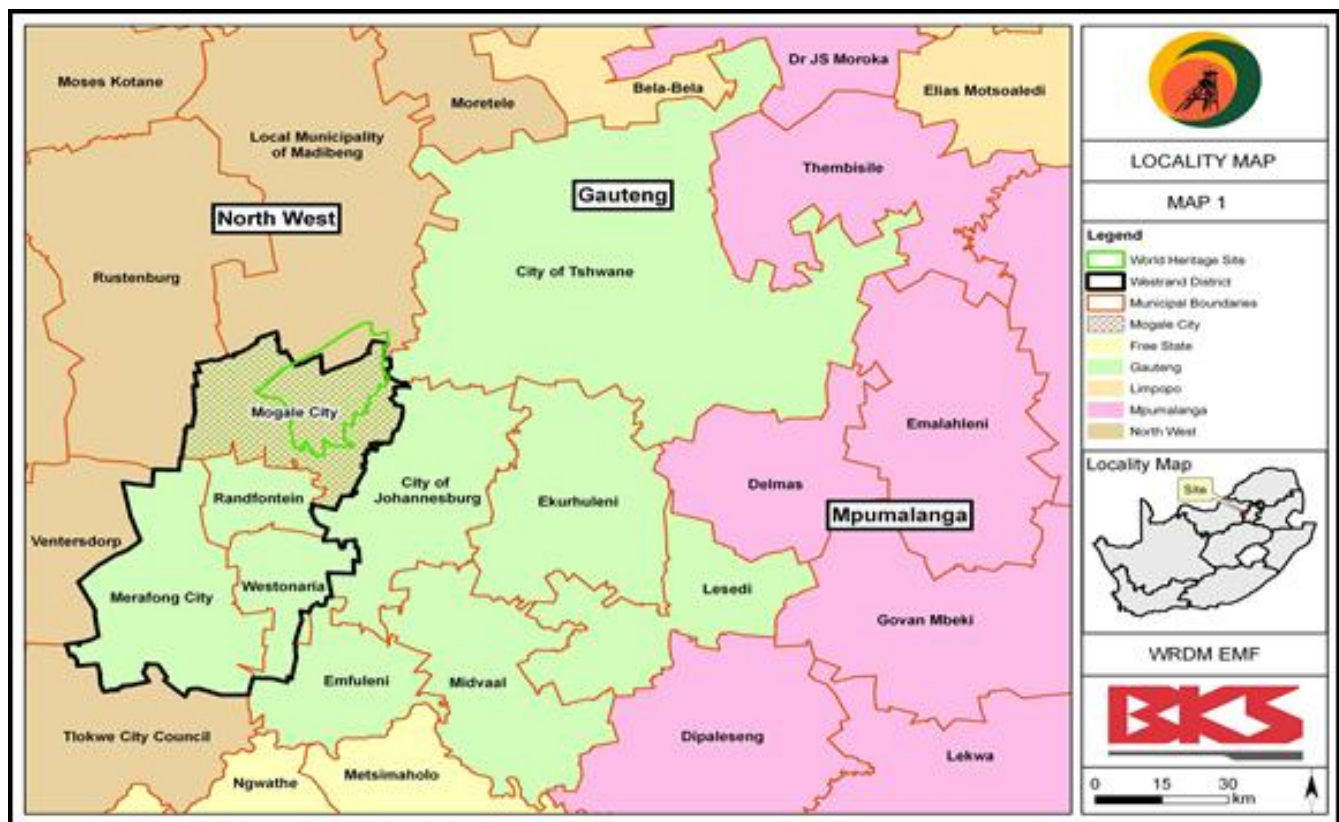
1.4.3. Case Study: The West Rand Vision 2016 - the Unicity

To complement the materials gleaned from secondary sources, a case study of the West Rand District through the lens of its Unicity Vision 2016 has been selected to demonstrate the prospects of establishing a competitive city in South Africa. This is to analyse the structure, the processes, political and social implications of developing a competitive city. The selection was made with an understanding that this is still an on-going process hence this is an opportune time to observe the processes and the outcomes as they unfold.

It is also interesting that this district is studied closely in order to locate the theoretical requirements that are purported to be prerequisites in creating competitive cities. The spatial dynamics of the West Rand district are characterised by its adjacent location with the highly dense, urbanised Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni metros. In contrast, the district has sparsely

located urban centres with open parcels of land – a contrasting feature to the notion of creating of competitive cities. Renowned as the mining hub of Gauteng, the case study assesses the viable sectors and the economic adjustments in response to the mining sector decline. In line with the prerequisites of establishing competitive cities, the West Rand is confronted with the reality of developing economic policies that will address the scarcity of jobs, as well as the reconfiguration of spatial patterns that can lead to more competitiveness. The case study also provides an opportunity to assess the intergovernmental and political processes in line with the regulatory frameworks and provincial development priorities. The new shift towards amalgamation has been met with legislative hindrances as the proposal needed to be tested against the set criteria. Therefore, the outcomes of the amalgamation process in the West Rand district present a compelling case to further determine the precedence for the subsequent municipal mergers in Gauteng.

Figure 1: Location Map of West Rand District in the Context of Neighbouring Gauteng Cities and Provinces



Source: Municipal Demarcation Board (www.wrdm.gov.za) 2013

1.4.4. In depth – Interviews

The library research was not adequate to reflect the updated status quo, especially on the preparations towards the achievement of Vision 2016 goals. In order to complement the secondary data, structured interviews with target political representatives, officials and members of the community were conducted. These are key role players that ascertain the process plans, roles and responsibilities of various offices of the district. On the aspect of structures - this information was gathered by interviewing the members of the Transformation Team from the district. This approach unravelled the subjective views and perceptions of the affected community members. The perceptual questions addressing the extent of the involvement of the citizenry in the planning processes and to determine the understanding, as well as buy in, into the vision were dealt with by interviewing a sample of the members of the community residing within the West Rand. The respondents were selected thus :

Table 1: A Table Illustrating the Selection of Respondents

Respondent	Role	Interview Dates
Three Mayors(district and local municipality)	<p>Political leadership:</p> <p>The Mayors are the political champions who articulate and give direction to the party political and mayoral priorities. They exercise oversight over the administration as well as ensure that the democratic processes of representation in the structures and consultation of stakeholders ultimately account to the political mandate.</p>	<p>1st October 2012</p> <p>2nd October 2012</p>
Three Members of Mayoral Committees	<p>Oversight over Transformation Committees:</p> <p>The MMC's are political leaders spearheading various Transformation Committees that are assigned with preparatory work for Vision 2016.</p>	<p>1st October 2012</p> <p>2nd October 2012</p>
Three Municipal Managers	<p>Accounting Officers:</p> <p>These are technical Champions of Transformation Committees who are pivotal and assigned to develop strategies in line with specific functions and to ensure the gathering of resources and efficient coordination is achieved.</p>	<p>2nd October 2014</p>
Ten Middle and Junior level staff members	<p>Employees of Local and district municipalities:</p> <p>The selection of employees at various levels is intended to attain their perception about the changes that are</p>	<p>2nd October 2012</p> <p>3rd October 2012</p>

	taking place - as they are directly affected.	
Ten Community Members	The Constituencies: The residents within the local municipalities of the West Rand District are also directly affected members who are critical in the decision-making process, as well as in placing legitimacy in the transformation process.	10 th October 2012
Two Relevant Experts in Development Planning	Commentary: The commentary by experts in the development planning field aims at deriving projections and neutral opinions about the intention, the process and the expected outcomes towards achieving Vision 2016.	27 th March 2012

1.4.5. Location Maps

Maps and photos are used to illustrate the locality and the physical scope of the research in comparison with the other surrounding district and metros in the Gauteng province. To a large extent, the map illustration demonstrates the cross-border opportunities and constraints, while also elaborating on the strategic connective transport networks.

1.4.6. Photographs

Photographs are used to deduce explanations on the events, activities and prominent figures that have led the process of driving the 2016 Vision. The use of photographs reflects gatherings and public demonstrations during the transformation process. This aids in the intention of demonstrating the spatial reconfiguration of the municipal boundaries, while photos affirm the commitment by the leadership, as well the high level engagements that have taken place so far. Photos are used to demonstrate a point such as sentiments on the real

manifestations of the concept such as meetings, analysts' views and any kind of reaction to the transformation agenda.

1.5. Limitations to the Research

The time of conducting this research is concurrent to the build-up leading to 2016, and is still underway towards a long-term vision of 2025. The limitation is that the study intends to make analysis of the possible long-term consequences of the merger while being conducted within a period of a year. However, drawing from other previous experiences, conclusions can be drawn and pointers, or recommendations, were made by comparing trends and drawing from other established cities within Gauteng.

The anticipated limitations range from access to information on the internal processes. This relates to information that was classified, and as a result impeded the update of information on overall progress. Some affected respondents were unhappy to articulate their own perceptions due to their position in the district. Some of them were, therefore, fearful of voicing differing views to those of their political parties.

The subject is a highly political matter that stems from the ruling party's political structures and is filtered down to the administrative structures. There is considerable red tape unless the information is made official. Secondly, the political climate is not always static, meaning that decisions are subjected to change due to a number of emerging factors. So, the analysis is based on developments so far, with some processes not being followed through as timeously as expected. It is envisaged that local government elections coming in 2016 will bring about change in political leadership, thus ensuing different strategic directions.

1.6. Ethical Considerations

According to Kimmel (1988) as cited in De Vaus (2001), social research should conform to four broad ethical principles, namely, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, no harm to participants and informed consent. All the four ethical principles were applied when conducting interviews with the respondents and informants in the West Rand District. The consideration is also in line with academic and legal standards that set the parameters of ensuring authenticity, legitimacy and accountability. The basic principles of ethical issues in conducting qualitative research determine that objectivity should be upheld. In conducting this research, there was no bias on the part of the researcher as there is no affiliation to the

institution, or direct involvement in the policymaking processes as neither a resident nor an employee of the West Rand District municipality. Therefore, reflective distance was upheld in drawing conclusions and conducting the analysis of the West Rand District.

Consent has been safeguarded as participants in the interviews were requested through formally written requests and have agreed to participate. The purpose of the research was thoroughly explained and the participants' anonymity was guaranteed. Furthermore, the use of secondary data and access to classified information is also verified and consent to use the documents was obtained. Confidentiality is an imperative part in the research ethics. In this case, the personal details of the respondents are not disclosed but referred to according to the professional or political roles.

1.7. Chapter Outline

The research report comprises six chapters, which will be illustrated as follows:

Chapter One draws attention to the strategic Vision 2016 and raises the question of whether it is viable or not in the West Rand Municipality. Secondary sources from government legislation, policies and newspapers are identified to be the subject of content analysis. These are accompanied by a set of interviews of officials and community members.

Chapter Two provides a review of wide variety of literature on the theoretical background and the detailed definition of conceptual framework in a hierarchal format. Neoliberalism ideology sets the scene of the existing economic systems and the underlying principles of the systems. Globalisation is a nexus concept that defines the manner, form and the context within which structural arrangements of the market economy exist. Regional competitiveness outlines the regulatory tools and instruments enabling the neoliberal market economy through macro and micro policy, regional agreements and the spatial, social and economic planning tools. Further to that are catalyst concepts, at a micro-level that advance globalised economic systems that are all embedded by competitiveness.

Chapter Three gives a detailed synopsis of the West Rand case study as it begins by presenting the socio-economic disparities amongst the communities and the political landscape within the district. An overview of the inception and progress thus far on the Vision 2016 is presented while outlining the driving principles for the amalgamation in West Rand. In this chapter, a view is given over the legislative context and the high-level

implications that the West Rand Vision 2016 has over the regulatory instruments towards establishing a competitive city. The aspects for consideration are the governance framework towards establishing reformed administrative structures, as well as political power sharing. With the proposal of various suitable institutional models, each governance model is examined on how far they can entrench democracy.

Chapter Four provides a synopsis of the West Rand municipal area that is currently going through a transition to position itself as a competitive city. In-detail, the components of the Vision 2016 are investigated. Critically, the chapter looks into the requirements of establishing a competitive city against the existing features of the West Rand. The concluding remarks charge critically on the leadership role in defining the correct institutional model while entrenching democratic and developmental objectives. Against the salient features of competitive cities, pointers indicate the role of the western region in the broader context on the Gauteng City Region, while giving a highlight on the observed shortcomings.

Chapter Five integrates the findings in the previous chapter with the planning theories of collaborative planning, equity planning and strategic spatial planning. Collaborative planning theory finds resonance in the Vision 2016 planning process to promote inclusivity and consensus building, while rendering legitimacy to the municipal-led development initiatives. Equity planning requires an establishment of active agents and networks, as well as platforms for dialogue. Collaborative leadership requires inclusiveness and the ability to foster collaboration with various actors. It is also demonstrated how the municipality can play a facilitation role through the provision of support structures and lead in providing governance mechanisms enabling transparency and accountability. These theories can be augmented by applying the strategic spatial planning theory as a holistic approach that promotes integration of the social, environmental and economic aspect to planning through measurable process plans.

Chapter Six summarises the key research findings from the previous chapters and draws recommendations. The salient findings indicate that the Unicity Vision 2016 is at an intermediary phase and the mechanisms, such as the various committees, have not adequately delivered on the tangible outputs. While a lot of activities and advocacy for the transformation is currently taking place, it is clear that the legal requirements do not allow for the initially conceived Unicity municipal model. Based on analysis, there are suggested ways

in which the West Rand can enhance its competitiveness. Collaborative planning is an essential approach that enables democratic and good governance processes. Equity planning is a preferred method that is in line with the developmental objectives of local government and is essential in addressing historical disparities. The overall study is a contribution towards the planning fraternity as it highlights the dynamics of transforming local government institutional models, as well as the implications of creating competitive cities. In this chapter, the key research findings and the emerging issues, are that competitive cities are enablers for governments to participate in the global neo-liberal system are highlighted. However, the state of maturity for the West Rand district as a competitive entity is arguable at various levels. Recommendations suggest the West Rand District is a learning institution; therefore flexibility and boldness are necessary to try new institutional reforms. Building institutional capacity through partnerships maintains a body of knowledge for implementing the various strategies for transformation. It is charged that the economic development strategy should be central and inform all municipal functions in order to yield economic outputs in all aspects.

CHAPTER TWO

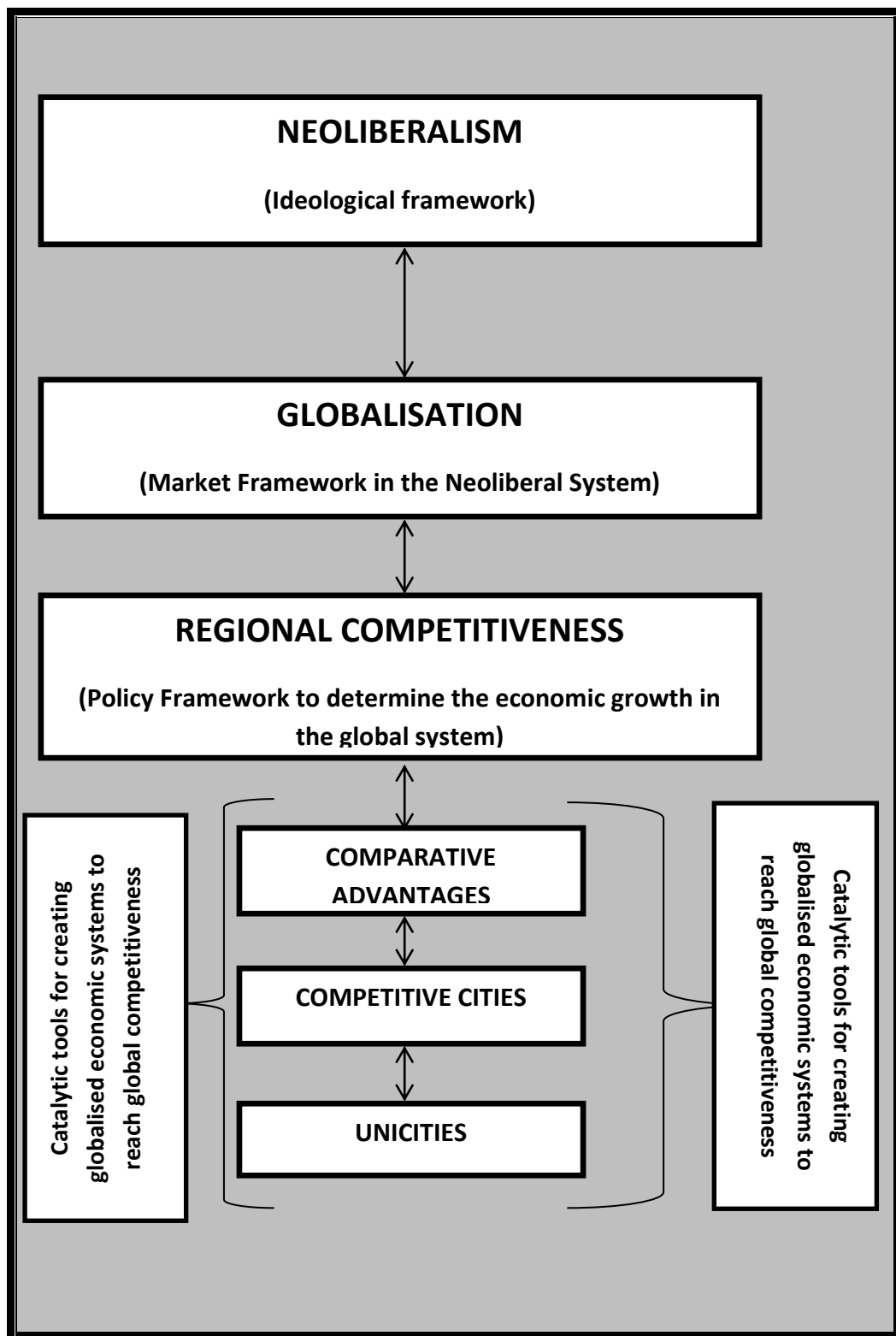
2. Theoretical Overview on the Creation of Competitive Cities

2.1. Introduction to the Conceptual Framework

The chapter provides a conceptual framework drawing from concepts as well as the theoretical views of various schools of thought in relation to the creation of competitive cities. There are a number of key concepts that are central in the literature on the subject of competitive cities, and they are used to guide the scope and context of this research. These concepts include neoliberalism, globalisation, regional competitiveness, comparative advantages, competitive cities and the unicities. These concepts form part of the kernel of the subject of competitiveness and mark signposts within which the debates of competitiveness at local and regional levels are framed. These concepts also provide in singular and in combination, the framing discourse and ideological spaces through legislative and policy development for local and regional government are developed. Thus, it is their conceptual connectedness that determines the form and shape that unicities take in South Africa.

This section begins with the neoliberalism as an ideological framework. Globalisation follows to define the market framework within the neoliberal system. Regional competitiveness puts into context the macroeconomic policy framework that determines the economic growth within the globalised economic system. Consequently, at a regional scale, comparative advantages are used as catalytic tools to create cluster economies while competitive cities are sites of production each capitalising on its economic niches. The creation of unicities is preliminary preparation towards the establishments of competitive cities. The connections between the concepts are depicted in *figure 2.1*. The framework below is a diagrammatic illustration interconnection for the concepts above to demonstrate their interrelation to each other:

Figure 2: A Diagram Illustrating the Conceptual Framework



2.2. Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism falls within the sequence of ideological shifts that can be traced to the nineteenth century. It follows the liberalism paradigm of the nineteenth century that was founded by such philosophers as Adam Smith, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Hartwich (2009) has written at length around urban planning and housing in the United Kingdom to relate that neoliberalism was conceived after the failure of liberalism in the 1920s when the world experienced the ‘Great Depression’ and in the times of industrial revolution in England. Rustow, a German liberal thinker, coined the term ‘neoliberalism’ to refer to this theoretical thinking. According to Hartwich, (*ibid*) Rustow was not in favour of the excessive involvement of the state in the economy. However, he acknowledged that the state needs to provide a basic regulatory environment. Unlike liberalist who advocated that the market should regulate itself freely without monitoring by the state, he saw the need for the state to play a minimal role of a ‘watchdog’ over markets. This neoliberalism in the authors’ terms was a reconciliatory approach between communism and capitalism and marked a paradigm shift from liberalism towards neo-marxist ideology.

However, in time, neoliberalism has appeared as an unclearly defined term which can be applied by different categories, varying from political economy, academics, social scientists and interest groups. Gans-Morse and Boas (2009) outline how the term has been applied asymmetrically across ideological divides and classify the common uses of the term in accordance with economic reform policies. Firstly, they argue that it refers to those policies that liberalise the economy, by eliminating price controls, deregulating capital markets, and lowering trade barriers. Secondly, they claim that it is those policies that reduce the role of the state in the economy, most notably via privatisation of state-owned enterprises; and those that contribute to fiscal austerity and macroeconomic stabilisation, including tight control of the money supply, elimination of budget deficits, and the curtailment of government subsidies.

The usage of neoliberalism is what Gans-Morse and Boas (2009) refer to as the neoliberal development model, describing it as a comprehensive development strategy with economic, social, and political implications. It involves a set of economic theories that are linked into a coherent recipe for growth or modernisation; prescriptions for the proper role of key actors such as labour unions, private enterprise, and the state; and an explicitly political project to carry out these prescriptions and ensure that actors play by the rules of the game. In this

sense, the neoliberal model can be contrasted with the state-led development model, which implied very different political roles for labour, capital, and the state. To this end, many scholars maintain that the implementation of a neoliberal model involves a restructuring of state-society relations as will be demonstrated in the West Rand District municipality case study.

The second perspective by Gans-Morse and Boas with regard to the usage of the word is a ‘third way’ approach, rather than as a dominant ideology. The authors argue that neoliberalism denotes the dominance of a political ideology, but rather purport the maximum use of individual freedom. This brings with it a set of other interrelated concepts such as democracy, human rights and freedom of choice to be the underlying norms in society. The authors argue that the founders of neoliberalism opposed the view of treating human beings as means to economic ends. To the contrary, they indicate that the markets and economic yields must be a mechanism used to meet the needs of the population.

In linking neoliberalism with the role of the state, the state is expected to play only a facilitative role in economic development. In a paper presented by Sentsho at the conference in Lusaka (2001), he indicates that the role of the state involves the provision of a ‘business-friendly’ and ‘enabling’ environment for the private sector. Within this framework, the private sector’s role is to determine the pace and direction of a country’s economic development, while the state only acts when the market fails. The latter relates to provision of goods and services that are not for profit, such as the basic service of law and order, education, health and infrastructure.

Therefore, it is conceivable to conclude that dual treatment of socialism and liberalism indicates a neoliberals’ view in as far as the state utilises economic forces through minimal interventions to advance its social welfare. In the context of South Africa, one can argue that the creation of competitive cities is based on the market principles of producing goods and services at a regional scale with the aim of generating economic revenue that can be channelled back to the state for it to generate more public goods. This view is supported by Reinert (1999), a Norwegian scholar at the Centre for Development who summarises the role of the state to be a provider of institutions; provider of income distribution and as the promoter of economic growth.

Neoliberalism as an ideological thinking or a paradigm that frames the context of competitiveness precedes all the other concepts. Thorsen and Lie (2001) define neoliberalism as an extension of the classical liberalism that was premised on the principles of the minimal role of the state in the economic markets, as well as the liberation of the individual sense of exercising freedom without limitation in the making of choices. Neoliberalism in an economic sense is the desire to intensify and expand the market, by increasing the number, frequency, repeatability, and formalisation of transactions. Thorsen and Lie (2001) point out that politically, neoliberalism promotes the notion that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual, especially commercial, liberty, as well as strong private property rights.

In the context of the West Rand, the theoretical framework for the creation of the unicity is located within an overarching influence of the neoliberal theory. The literature and research reviewed indicates that all aspects related to competitiveness of cities are linked to the principles and character of neoliberal thinking. For instance, the vision of becoming amalgamated can be viewed as a neo-liberalist approach by way of a restructuring the local municipalities as the move is intended to yield efficiency through the delivery of services. Therefore, the analysis of various theoretical approaches will be outlined through the lens of neoliberalism. Under the framework of the Neoliberal school of thought, the West Rand District is seeking to adopt new local governance models that will optimise the economies of scale in return for a sound revenue base. By generating the optimal economy of scale and applying market principles in the public management, the West Rand intends to yield revenues that can be channelled towards service delivery improvements.

2.3. Globalisation

This neoliberal sentiment is linked to the discourse of globalisation. Globalisation has different interpretations and is a contestable concept. In simplest terms, globalisation refers to a global web of accelerated exchange in goods and services underpinned by economic factors like the means and sites of production (Giddens: 1991). It borrows from the capitalist norms of exploitation of the capital (natural resources and labour) and is characterised by inequalities in terms of distributions of dividends and in the social strata (Altvertar: 2007). Globalisation explains the processes and the structural arrangements in the context on neoliberalism. According to Business Enterprises Reform (2008), globalisation can be broadly defined as a process that allows for the swift movement, transfer and exchange of

people, ideas, goods and services transcending the locational boundaries. It is facilitated by the adoption of open economic policies to international trade; it necessitates the technological advancements for the purposes of exchanging goods and services, information and ideas.

These include transport, modes of communication and efficient means of production. It promotes the emergence of the developing regions taking centre stage in the global economy. It is mainly characterised by migration of population, socio-economic disparities and the levels of dependencies, as well as issues of power. Thus, the West Rand must seek ways of rapidly distributing their outputs through strategic transport nodes and information systems in order to ensure their competitiveness on the global economy.

Mullard (2004) is a scholar who explains that globalisation is not an inevitable and an eventuality of life. Rather, he is of the idea that it is a result of deliberate policy choices which lead to economic inequalities and elitism to the distortion of democracy. One of his interpretations of globalisation is what he refers to as 'hyper-globalism'. This term he argues, relates to the borderless economy wherein trading between corporations [and multinationals] has greater influence on foreign direct investments. This influence is central to the operations of the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation who reinforce free trade, liberalisation of developing countries and privatisation of public entities.

In the process of contextualising globalisation, Ritzer (2007) indicates that this concept has a multidisciplinary use and sums it up to political, economic, and cultural theoretical aspects. Within the political theory, globalisation is viewed in the liberals' sense as referring to the belief in the free market and in the removal of any impediments, especially from the state and political entities. This point alludes to the 'hollowing of the state' - buzz words wherein the state relinquishes the ownership of its entities and functions through the economic principles of privatisation and maximisation of profit (Pyper, Undated). A realists' political conviction of globalisation sees the concept as an outcome of the power relation among states. Ritzer (2007) expands this view by saying that the states are seen to be aggressively pursuing their own interests on the global stage. On this point, the author further argues that the conflict between the United States of America and the Middle East has been about America attempting to secure its economic interests by protecting its oil supplies.

The economic world-system theory that Ritzer (2007) puts forward talks to the capitalist division of nations according to the 'core' and 'periphery'. He explains that it is a neo-Marxist approach, where the core states are the capitalists exploiting the proletariat (the peripheral nations) economically. This applies to multinationals and among the societies, regions, as well as urban centres versus the rural communities that operate within the capitalist system. Ritzer (2007) notes that the economic globalisation analogy is about the Transnational Culture (TNCs) which is defined as a culture of consumerism that is perpetuated by the Transnational Practices (TNPs) and is set in motion by the Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC).

The influence of globalisation on culture can be looked at in three ways. Ritzer (2007) identifies a cultural differentialism wherein globalisation processes can take place on the surface but cannot be affected at the intrinsic core. The cultural divergence which, in contrast to the former, relates to the cultural sameness throughout the world. This is largely an assimilation of cultures that belong to the dominant groups, or nations, hence the coining of words like 'westernisation', 'McDonaldisation' and cultural 'imperialism'. Thirdly is cultural hybridisation, which relates to the mixture of cultures as a result of globalisation wherein internationally dominant and local cultures merge to produce artificial changes in other cultures. For instance, music can remain with a cultural essence in language and rhythm but injects foreign sounds and instrumental elements.

Anthony Giddens (1991), a renowned contemporary sociologist defines globalisation as the intensification of worldwide social relations linking distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many thousands of miles away and vice versa. Although every attempt of classifying the processes of globalisation necessarily results in oversimplification and a reduction of complexity, Giddens defines four dimensions of globalisation.

Firstly, Giddens points out that the main centres of power in the world economy are capitalist states – states in which capitalist economic enterprise is the chief form of production. This allows wide scope for the global activities of business corporations which always have a home base within a particular state, but may develop many other regional involvements elsewhere. In the second dimension, Giddens points out about globalisation that it is closely

linked to the sovereignty of the nation-states. Sovereignty in the globalised society is constantly tested and replaced by “frontiers” by “borders”.

The third dimension is the world military order. Due to the massive destructive power of modern weaponry, almost all states possess military strength far in excess of that of even the largest of pre-modern civilisations. The countries involved in these alliances necessarily accept limitations over their opportunities to forge independent military strategies externally. The fourth dimension of globalisation concerns industrial development. The most obvious aspect of this is the expansion of the global (international) division of labour, which includes the differentiation between more and less industrialised areas in the world. Modern industry is intrinsically based on division of labour, not only on the level of job tasks but on that of regional specialisation in terms of the type of industry, skills, and the production of raw materials.

In line with Giddens’ rationalisation of globalisation, South Africa embraces a global footprint of international corporations that hail from headquarters far afield. With the influence of international frontiers, the state by borders has been somehow permeated by global community affiliations with similar identities, cultures and particular interests such as social, religious, environmental and economic movements. Furthermore, it can be argued that South Africa is imbedded in the global division of labour characterised as a ‘developing’ country wherein forces of industrialisation are primitive compared to the developed nations.

Hence the Gauteng Province and the West Rand District have adopted the ‘culture’ of developing a competitive city vision in tandem with the practices of global cities like London and New York. Saskia Sassen (2005) purports a set of hypothesis to explain the character of the global cities. In her view, global cities are characterised by geographical spread of economic activities that are strategically centralised and located. She details that global cities manifest an information economy as high levels of expertise and specialisation is fundamental towards the resilience of economic markets. Furthermore, global cities rely on the creation of global networks transcending through cross borders leading to international investments. These dynamics also lead to a secondary informal economy driven by the section of individuals or organisations that do not have international footprints and influence to compete.

The elements mentioned above are reflected in the Gauteng province holistically and is heralded by the culture of 'globalism'. The infiltration of the 'globalism culture' into the Gauteng government as a discursive force has led to the revolution in the social and political paradigm where actors are more inclined to 'likeness' (globalisation) while embracing 'distinctiveness' (localisation). The significant elements of globalisation are linked to interconnectedness and rapid exchanges of goods and services. The amalgamation of the West Rand District local authorities are influenced by the desire to consolidate resources for the rapid and efficient exchange of services and goods with the broader Gauteng region, as well as to venture into global markets.

2.4. Regional Competitiveness

Globalisation is seen to be an elementary function of regional competitiveness. According to Budd and Hirmis (2004), regional competitiveness is determined by the quest for investment through the regions' ability to attract private, foreign and public capital; by being able to attract skilled labour and innovative technological equipment as well as sites for specialised production. Regional competitiveness is dependant on comparative advantages that create niches of sub-regions that, when put together, create a competitive region. It is a catalytic process in the globalisation process to necessitate specialised production, as well as consumption of goods that are rapidly exchanged in the market. Thus, the West Rand is strategically positioning itself as a green 'economic hub' that entails excelling in the agricultural and other primary sectors (WRDM: 2012).

The creation of economic hubs is akin to the formation of clusters. Cluster theory relates to the agglomeration of economies of scale where activities cluster together whether they use the same infrastructure, have linkages to each other and to the same environment, and profit from one another's presence, or to the enhancing of image for the cluster. This theory was widely popularised by Micheal Porter in the late 1990's where he defined clusters as 'geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions that encompass an array of linked industries and entities important for competition' (1998:97). He mentioned the supply of specialised inputs and infrastructure, customers, manufacturers of complementary products, companies related by skills, technology, governmental and knowledge institutions and trade associations. The theory has rapidly become popular in the discussions for many cities, regions and countries in developing cluster policies as already pointed out in the West Rand District municipality.

In close relation with the cluster theory is the Regional Growth theory. In essence, Richardson (1973) indicates that there are key elements that are associated with the Regional Growth theory. There are locational indicators to determine the space economy such as the natural resources, an existence of a large city and a particular advantage or heterogeneity that may have led to the development. The point can be attested with the growth of mining cities such as Johannesburg, and towns such as Rustenburg that grew due to an abundance of certain natural resources. Similarly with the West Rand, the emergence of towns such as Carletonville was premised on the natural availability mining resources. Therefore, regions and cities depend on their internal immobile resources and retaining them while having the ability to attract other mobile resources.

Secondly, regions need to agglomerate as economies of scale and must be conjoined in order to enhance the strength as an economic 'block'. Richardson attests that locational constants can be an impediment for agglomeration and imposes high transportation costs. In order to necessitate linkages, regions would relax the transportation costs and maximise flexibility in mobility to promote decentralisation within the region. In the case of Gauteng, the government has invested in Bus Rapid Transport systems, the Gautrain and expanded the road networks in major routes. According to the study commissioned by the University of Johannesburg (2012), the infrastructure development is a response to the current land use within Gauteng and indicates an attempt on the government's part to address their 'global planning framework'. Whilst the West Rand has not intensively established or diversified the transportation networks, the administrative consolidation is a preparation towards harmonised resource planning in order to achieve coordinated networks in the province.

The last point is the level of durability of infrastructure investments that will determine the investment decisions for the space economy of the future. For instance, locating a production plant will be dependent on road networks and skilled labour force already in existence. Related to this point is that of questing for innovation and technical advancement, as well as high-tech communication channels in the inter-regional level. In line with Richardsons' argument, the West Rand District is attempting to amass, or agglomerate, its economies of scale by augmenting the inherent geographic strength such as the environmental and natural resources. This is intended to be a means of co-joining the rest of the local authorities in a

strategy of minimising the costs of conducting business while harmonising the infrastructural development.

According to Cooke (1983), network theory emphasises the importance of personal and work related networks that may play a crucial role in determining where to start a business and where to expand. Within the sociology field, the networks theory is premised on the notion that urbanity is the result of social processes in space rather than land use bounded by space, and purports that the social system is a system of inter-functional roles prescribed by shared norms and underpinned by culturally-determined values. The proponents of this theory, such as Cooke (1983) explain that this arrangement is embedded in four systems that impose certain functional prerequisites. Firstly, there is a social aspect which presupposes that the functional norm of adaptation of social organisation for systems maintenance, such as economic activity and the goal attainment, is worked out by the political spheres. Secondly, there is a cultural system which pre-supposes the integration aspect – a normative order of values to legitimise the social order. Thirdly, there is a personal system which is seen to detract from the collective as it imposes order for un-socialised persons. However, individuals are conditioned to conform in the set of societal norms and standards after which are subjected to punitive measures if found transgressing. The last one is the physical system which is, according to the proponents, the least important of all the former unless it presupposes certain functional prerequisites on other systems.

The relationship between the physical systems and the rest are said to be fluid in that cultural norms find expression in the built environment wherein institutions, consumption, and state values are entrenched. Critically, for this research the argument is that urban planning thus becomes an instrument for advancing the dominant values that manifest in the approach in which urban areas and cities will develop. Masterd and Mourie (1983) further indicate that competitiveness arises out of a 'soft' conditions theory which asserts the importance of specific urban amenities that create an environment to attract people who are key to the most promising economic activities for the economic development of the region. They define soft conditions as the quality of life, urban atmosphere, housing market conditions, levels of tolerance, openness and the diversity of the population. In addition, they elaborate on the 'creative class' as coined by Richard Florida (2002) which refers to a class of super creative core consisting of scientists, engineers, university professors, poets, actors, artists, architects, think-tank researchers, analysts and opinion formers. In addition to this group are talented

people working in knowledge industries such as high technology sectors, financial sectors, and judicial services. The concentration of the skilled labour contributes to innovation and contributes towards the exponent growth of the knowledge economy.

The soft conditions theory suggests that the institutional and physical structures where people can meet, including bars, cafes, and restaurants are important features for the cities to attract creative people. Montgomery (2005) adds another dimension to this theory by indicating that for cities to be creative and attractive they need to promote artistic, design and technological skills, and by harnessing local talent while growing creative industries. The success of this feature lies in the hands of the visionary political leadership, the artists, investors and entrepreneurs.

The prerequisite conditions presented by Montgomery (2005) critically indicate the notion that skills are drivers of growth, and that skilled workers locate according to some set of preferences. Nonetheless, there is an appreciation that things do not change overnight and there is a logical change process as cities adapt to their inherent circumstances. Even though changes may be slow and cities are constrained by their historical background, adaptation should be informed by more knowledge about why spatial selectivity in the settlement behaviour of creative and knowledge intensive industries take place.

Based on the capitalist school of thought that embraces free markets and dominant political theory, the theoretical literature drawn from Holupka and Shlay in their essay within Bingham and Mier (1993) indicate that city development strategies and land-use planning tools can be used to manifest a dominant political ideology. This body of literature connotes that there is a minority collection of decision-makers and local actors that will determine local development. Furthermore, the distribution of benefits from development is highly skewed favouring those on top at decision making level while the public largely bears the cost of development. This school of thought assumes that metropolitan development is highly undemocratic, as critical decisions are not sufficiently presented to the public domain. Rather, there is a level of malicious legitimisation processes that presents an artificial participation. Noting the elements of regional competitiveness as a symbolism of a compact 'block', it does require the internal preparations of comparative advantages that are discussed below.

2.5. Comparative Advantages

Dewen and Fang (2005), who write from a Chinese academy of Social Science refer to comparative advantages of a region [be it on a local scale or a city or a block of nations] to be about its' endowment structure in natural resources, capitals and labour force. They both elaborate that these factors become determinants of strategic positioning for economic production sites and correlate in a complementary manner. This means a region would comprise various economic factors as means of production and, if put together, produce an economically competitive nucleus. This phenomenon explains the factors of production and their coherent relationship in the neo-capitalistic system.

Comparative advantage tends to induce specialisation. Chloe and Roberts (2011) cite an example of the aftermath of World War II where they indicate that most countries built up national industries in their regions to export specialised goods and services to international markets. Economic planning sought to achieve comparative advantage by keeping production costs (labour, materials, energy, taxes and infrastructure) low relative to those of competitors. The full costs of production, as the authors narrate, were often not accounted for, but tariffs, incentives and infrastructure subsidies were lowered to increase comparative advantage. Positioning itself as a 'food basket' for the Gauteng province, the West Rand District indicates its value add in the chain of economic activities in Gauteng regional economy by its endowment in agricultural land, tourism potential as well as mining though in decline. These aspects are used complementarily with the strengths of other municipalities in the Gauteng region to create comparative links that will position Gauteng holistically as a sufficient competitive region.

According to Chloe and Roberts (2011), the opening up of economies to competition and the growing dominance of cities as drivers of economic development have significantly changed ideas of how cities can gain competitive advantage. As the paradigm and the conceptual process that necessitate how competitive cities come about, there are four internationally dominant theoretical approaches in the literature that seek to bring about an understanding of what could make cities competitive. According to Masterd and Mourie (2010:144), these can be classified as the 'hard conditions theory, cluster theory, the personal networks and the 'soft' conditions theory'. The hard conditions theory suggests that there are certain preconditions that lead to the economic development of regions as is the case for competitive cities. Masterd and Mourie point out that hard conditions refers to the availability of capital

and labour with adequate skills, proper institutional context, tax regimes, up to date infrastructure and easy accessibility are regarded as playing a major role in developing competitive cities. Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2003) also persuasively charge that the principle of comparative advantage is a precursor for city competitiveness. They argue that that regions and cities will produce those goods or services for which they have a relative advantage, usually because of infrastructure, natural resources, labour, or capital endowments.

With these arguments, one can add that this can be located within the globalisation process where societies, regions and nations arrange each other complementarily for strategic positioning to compete with each other across boundary lines. The South African cities such as Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg were formed through the amalgamation process of smaller authorities. Similarly, districts, provinces and Southern African Development Community (SADC) are such examples of amalgamation and allegiance towards the enhancement of economic potential.

2.6. Competitive advantages

The notion of competitiveness can largely be attributed to Micheal Porter, an expert on the subject who has produced an internationally acclaimed book around competitiveness, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations and Competitive Strategy*. Porter has demonstrated, through his work, a conviction of how competitiveness of firms, regions and nations can yield economic benefits and the risks that come with it. He is without criticism from his counterparts such as Paul Krugman (Begg: 1998). Begg accounts that critics like the economist Krugman, have been critical of Porter by indicating that competitiveness is an attribute of companies, not of cities, regions, countries or continents. However, what is apparent from the points above is that there is no absolute definition of competitiveness, hence it can be loosely applied in different contexts from firms to nations and regions. The underlying common principle is, however, that cities to nations, like firms, do demonstrate rivalry and are focused on some form of specialisation.

Competitive cities have become a necessity for local economic development. Chloe and Roberts (2011) argue that cities become competitive through shared services and infrastructure, urban infrastructure, communications, and public services; business rivalry and

cooperation; access to natural resources and skills; location relative to markets; risk management; social capital; quality of life. These authors point out that these factors are not all present and not to the same degree, in all cities, especially in the developing world. Based on the argument above, it can be deduced that competitive cities are therefore structural means in the globalised system as sites for production and determinants of competitiveness of nations. They are also fostered to yield socio-economic benefits. Particularly for the West Rand, the intentions of becoming a competitive city is justified by socio-economic benefits that can be yielded through new 'green jobs' and, ultimately, the improvement in the quality of life. Competitiveness of West Rand district can be based on its ability to comfortably claim its specialisation in a particular trade with significant latitude in comparison to other cities.

2.7. Unicity

As noted above, the competitive cities are fully-fledged geographical areas that serve a special function in a geographic region. In contrast, 'Unicity' emerge as precursory establishments towards the creation of competitive cities. Reddy (2003) defines the Unicity to be a result of an urban policy that rationalises the city boundaries to achieve a metropolitan economic region with a single municipal jurisdiction. It recognises the need to manage the resources at a metropolitan level, with the aim of improving service delivery provision, financial viability and positioning itself as an economically competitive spatial unit that can be an active player in the regional economy. The development of the unicity can thus be regarded as a primitive stage towards regional competitiveness by strategically positioning the prerequisites for competitive cities.

As such, the West Rand District is currently at a stage of entering the terrain of becoming a fully functional metro through the merging of local municipalities into a single municipality. The district rationalises the establishment of the Unicity by presenting the similar reasons to Reddy above. The West Rand Vision 2016 Strategic Framework enlists that the merging of municipal boundaries will lead into the creation of the economies of scale, optimal distribution of resources and financial viability.

The strategic move towards a unicity is not a new phenomenon in the rapidly urbanised South African geographical centres. The public institution reforms at the local government began to take shape in 2000 where cities like the former Cape Metropolitan Area – now called The City of Cape Town - went through amalgamation of Regional Service Councils. Similar to

the Transformation Committees in West Rand District, Parnell and Robinson (2006) elaborate that the Cape Metropolitan Area had a Unicity Commission that was instrumental in establishing a smooth transition towards the City of Cape Town Metropolitan city. In the South African context, there has been great propensity of rationalising the closely located urban centres to amalgamate to form 'competitive cities' or to be declared as metros. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) defines metropolitan areas as large urban settlements with high population densities; complex and diversified economies and high degrees of functional linkages across a larger geographical area than the normal jurisdiction of a municipality. Economic and social activities would transcend municipal boundaries and residents may live in one locality, work in another, and utilise recreational facilities across the metropolitan area.

To become more competitive, many cities have encouraged more concentrated, specialised, and integrated production and capital investment in regions that offer the greatest competitive advantage to investors, buyers, transnational corporations, and other producers. As labour and environmental costs rise, they need to develop industries that are more specialised by taking advantage of urban agglomeration (Pillay: 2003). Subsequently, there has been a strong political will set in motion that urban development is geared towards the rationalisation and amalgamating of smaller urban regions into 'competitive cities' as is the case for Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and, more recently, the West Rand Uni-City. This is also evident in the case of the Gauteng province as captured in the vision 2055, wherein much preparation has gone towards transforming the current multi-municipal authorities into a Gauteng City Region.

De Villiers (2001) puts a compelling argument in favour of the metropolitan unicities, asserting that the administrative and operational costs can be reduced considerably as there will be a single local government identity and administration throughout the metropolitan area. The political and administrative bureaucracy will also be reduced considerably, particularly when metropolitan issues have to be coordinated and addressed. De Villiers also argues that this approach can enable the facilitation of an integrated development planning to create greater economies of scale relative to service delivery, as well as one budgeting system for equitable service provision.

Professor Reddy (2003) raises some of the criticisms levelled at the unicity model. In his sense of scepticism, he points out that the creation of cities is highly centralised and, in fact, goes against the whole notion of decentralisation proposed in the White Paper on Local Government and the Municipal Systems Act, 2000. He indicates that the policymaking processes can be centralised and will be insensitive to the needs of the local citizenry. A key question is whether it will be able to address the needs of communities living in the historically marginalised fringes of the cities while resuscitating the vibrancy and the functionality of rural-rural linkages.

With the experience of amalgamation of former councils and regions in Johannesburg, Reddy points to a challenge of strategy misalignment as the unicity model centralises policy development, coordination, and standardisation while implementation is left to the former regions that are now satellite centres. He points out that this governance model is distorted since in Johannesburg the core departments infringed on the implementation role, which was meant to be the preserve for the regions.

He further draws the lessons such as the duplication of roles in various business line functions, staffing as well as reporting. Hence, institutional redesign is critical to ensure relevance of the sought talent and retention, as well as in the reduction of operational costs - such as salaries and tools of trade. Coupled with institutional design, is a low level of quality assurance in terms of oversight over entities, and departments can compromise the value of capital injections wherein entities do not fully account due to poor contracts management. Also, much of the contestation arises from counter arguments against the broader framework for creating competitive cities as discussed below.

2.8. Contestations of Concepts in the Development Framework

The international literature locates the neoliberalism paradigm as the genesis and the springboard in which the sequel of terms and processes are linked. Neoliberalism sets in motion the free market conditions where the role of the state is limited to regulation and safeguarding basic public goods and services. A critique from the political economy school of thought by Micheal Foucault (1991) is that the public realm is progressively confined through privatisation, the marketisation of public services, the introduction of competitive pressures into public institutions, and the infusion of private financial arrangements into public institutions. In Foucault's view, neoliberalism diminishes the public and collective identity

and reinforces the decline of public virtues, collective solidarities, caring values, and common institutions.

While Foucault's views are appealing for the greater common good, the efficiency in the provision of public goods and services through market principles is a commendable aspect of this paradigm. A sociologist, Karl Polanyi (1944) who highlights that the common good can be attained through neoliberal principles, advances a compelling contrasting view. He argued that free markets can only create rapid growth by undermining the conditions of human sociality upon which they depend. To be sustainable, and to promote human welfare, economic relationships needed to be embedded in a fabric of regulations, institutions and social norms. Therefore, the 'West Rand Vision 2016' augurs the regulatory, interventions and collaborative role of the West Rand District in so far as setting facilitating regional social and economic growth.

In South Africa, there have been strong voices that have stood to oppose the basic principles of a neoliberal state. The Anti-Privatisation Forum and Patrick Bond are one of the vocal opponents against the market principle approach on the delivery of public services. The argument by Bond (2003) is based on incongruity with the commodification of natural resources and basic goods. He has vehemently argued for the anti-privatisation of water and electricity basic services, advocating that the approach is exclusionary to the poor masses at the benefit of the financially empowered elite. He criticised at length the South African democratic government for adopting the neoliberal ideology in persuasion by the supranational organisation, the World Bank. He argues that the ramifications of this approach reinforce societal inequalities and refusal of a basic human right.

Neoliberalism as an extension of capitalism ideology, is underpinned by the notion of the class dominance 'the hegemony'. The notion that the 'state' may favour the market approaches for public management as a means to meet the objectives of the dominant class. Therefore, the geographical re-scaling of the West Rand District may be interpreted as a political voyage that is aimed at securing and consolidating power of the ruling party.

Globalisation is a neoliberal process of accelerated exchange of goods and services infiltrating the borders of sovereign states. It is based on the exploitative relations equated to capitalist modes of production. The globalisation phenomenon has received a heightened

wave of disapproval by the so called 'anti-globalisation movement' (Blaiker: 2002). Roland Blaiker narrates the remarkable anti-globalisation encounters that took place in Seattle against the World Trade Organisation. The event signified the convergence of environmentalists, health activists, students, anti-capitalists and concerned citizens who all demonstrated their disapproval of globalisation.

According to Blaiker (2002), the event brought the world to the attention of the failures of globalisation. As alluded above about the salient element of rapid information exchange, the anti-globalisation argument is that this element brings about inequality due to digital divide. In their view, the world is no more divided as the rich North or poor South, but made distinct by economic possession regardless of the spatial location. The benefits of access to information, travel and ease of trade are to the disposal of those that can afford much to the demise of the poorest of the poor as they are perpetually left in the dens of poverty. They also advance the argument that the costs of imbalanced access to the world of speed go further than the creation of material and social disparities. The most fatal inequalities may well emerge from the creation of two different mind sets and the types of privileges they beget.

Another point of discontent raised by the movement according to Blaiker is that of the dominance of supra-national organisations and international economic institutions. The protestors argue the lack of accountability by these influential institutions in instances where they are able to by-pass or rescind the laws that are passed by the sovereign countries. They argue that the subsequent global free-trade system is compromising the disadvantaged groups and the environment in favour of the short-term pursuits of profit-seeking capital. It was also a lament of the prioritisation and favour of the commercial interests against environmental and gender related interests.

Having highlighted the bones of contention around globalisation, what may seem lacking from the proponents is an alternative way of organising the global socio-economic relations. What is gathered by Blaiker is that the anti-globalisation movement is not speaking with one voice. Rather, it is a collection of conflicting interests and, largely from the European countries again, reinforces disparities in access. Keily (2005) however, seems to suggest a few alternatives that are proposed by the anti-globalisation movements.

The alternative advanced is that of 'Global Reform'. This phenomenon entails the 'de-globalisation' wherein all production and investment will be localised as well as the re-collection of the public service initiatives. In essence, it is about decommissioning the supra-national organisations and instituting more localised ones but serving the same function such as the World Trade Organisations and International Monetary Fund. Another proposal is that of 'Localisation' - which seeks to evade economic and cultural homogenisation. Localisation intends to do away with the associated costs of exporting the goods. The key principle is that all decisions should be made at the lowest decision making authority as possible. Although not totally discarding international trade, it advocates, however, that it shall be done in the manner that will always benefit the local common good instead of few private businesses and individuals.

In this account, it can be argued that globalisation is a factual and inevitable phenomenon. Whilst the successes have been articulated above, the antagonists have failed to present different scenarios of preserving the democratic institutions, freedom of choice and a complementary justice system to arbitrate in conflicts. In the absence of compelling alternatives, it can be concluded that the creation of competitive cities in South Africa is not necessarily off the mark, but an agenda that is largely facilitated by the demands of the global economy.

Competition and competitiveness are the intrinsic driving forces for globalisation since all competing goods, nations and regions require the efficacy of speed and instant access in order to stay ahead of competition. Therefore, globalisation is a causal factor of regional competitiveness at a multinational, localised scale, as well as in the systemic clustering of firms. Borozan (2008) summates that the notion of regional competitiveness into three distinctive spatial dimensions. The micro-level refers to the basic nuclear establishment of firms where the modes of production market principles such as specialisation and division of labour come to play. The macro-level is a derivative of the former, only the cities or nations come to a 'competitive' game of advancing firms with most market shares globally through macroeconomic policies. The third level of regional competitiveness alludes to regions as agglomerations of cities that form particular alliances in relation to policy making. At this level, the intrinsic feature is the emphasis on the quality of life and prosperity as a performance output of the region.

To connect the creation of a competitive city in the West Rand District as a competitive region, the driving principle is to reinforce the aptitude of itself as a region to recognise, network and stimulate their abilities aimed to achieve prosperity and social objectives such as reduction of inequality and poverty, high-quality primary health protection, and education for everyone.

The macroeconomic description of a region, as defined in accordance to the market principles of division of labour, largely relies on the existence of comparative advantages. To start with, comparative advantage infers that different regions should specialise in diverse commodities, each producing them as competently as possible. While the specialisation for production may sound plausible due to the obvious economic yield, a lot of criticism is levelled against the comparative advantages theory.

2.9. Local government Consolidation for Socio-Economic and Spatial Redistribution

In order to derive a comprehension on the relevance of creating competitive cities in South Africa, it is necessary to understand the rationale behind local government consolidation as a means to address the socio-economic redistribution agenda. The 1994 democratic government of South Africa inherited the challenge of redressing the socio-economic and spatial disparities that were created by the Apartheid regime. The reality was that of high inequalities along the racial lines with poverty highly entrenched in the previously disenfranchised communities as well as high unemployment rates (Abedian and Beggs: 1998). In response to these challenges, Pycroft (1999) explain that the Reconstruction and Development Programme (DDP) was an accelerated response by government to addressing service delivery backlogs as well as to reposition the South African economy with attempts to increase investor confidence in the country.

The RDP policy was soon superseded by Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR). The GEAR policy brought about fundamental changes in the functioning of the state by encouraging minimal state intervention and promoting marketed oriented economic growth (Natrass:1999). In the quest for accelerating socio-economic growth for improving the qualities of life, the government viewed local government as critical sphere of implementing the developmental agenda. From this point, a local government agenda was restructured and premised on developmental approaches such as integrated development planning and local economic development (Cashdan:2000:4).

According to Parnell and Pieterse (1998), the integrated development planning approach was identified by government as a mechanism of meeting the democratic governments' objectives of restitution by distribution, redevelopment and growth. As such, the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) are regarded as tools of integrating the previously segregated communities through equitable service provision. The spatial development frameworks within the IDPs were intended to address specifically an integrated approach in distribution of land, bulk infrastructure and public resources. Therefore the amalgamation of local authorities as it is the case in West Rand district is a form of redistribution wherein the previously disadvantaged authorities are able to benefit from a central regional fiscus.

In relation to spatial redistribution, Visser (2001) opines that the negotiated urban vision and imagined urban spaces entailed in the IDP reinforce redistribution and equity since there is more democratic participation in designing physical urban landscape. The Vision 2016 Strategic Framework of West Rand highlights the objectives of amalgamation is to rationalise service delivery and improve the economies of scale. These objectives are clear indications that local government consolidation is not only limited to increasing competitiveness but also to address social justice and redistribution agenda in South Africa. Chapter Three entails in detail the socio-economic challenges of the district as uneven distribution of service delivery and slanted revenue resources. Therefore, disparities in the living conditions and imbalances of economic activities can be arguably stated as a primary basis for amalgamation.

2.10. Conclusion

A key question in economic development is whether it is better for a state or region to pursue specialisation (build on existing concentrations of industry) or diversification (developing a variety of industry concentrations). Cortright (2006) indicates two conflicting views on this question. The first holds that places with a greater concentration of industries will be more successful. Localities with a high density of firms and workers with similar interests will lead those firms and workers to add to, and refine, knowledge in a cumulative way. In contrast, he holds a view that more industrially diverse places will be more successful as diversity promotes economic success through some combination of variety and serendipitous interaction, which leads to new ideas and occasionally to new industries.

Secondly, comparative advantage assumes low costs for intra-regional trade, but the authors highlight that the modern society is actually witnessing more tariffs and restrictive policies for the movements of goods (Johnson and Krauss, 1970). This means that the notion of free trade is but an illusion. Thirdly, comparative advantage theory assumes the protection of full employment and labour intensive methods of production. However, the global competition for cheap labour, technological advancement for speedy production actually threatens the security of the local work force.

While the resilience of competitive cities is said to largely rely on the sound comparative advantages factors, it is obvious that the depletion of endogenous assets, the level of speed in goods and information exchange as well as pioneering innovation strategies will determine the competitiveness mileage of the cities. The development of competitive cities has been acknowledged as a catalytic economic advancement for many countries as they generate high Gross Domestic Products and serve as important landmarks or strategic sites in the international markets. Nevertheless, cities are affected by common trends and face common challenges. In particular, the key challenge they face is to develop new models of decision-making, which will increase their economic competitiveness while at the same time reduce social exclusion (Parkinson *et al* 2003).

Renowned authors such as Healey *et al* (2005) put out that the excellence of urban governance, in terms of effective administration and democratic politics, has been given greater emphasis in the past few years. This has further objectives of producing efficient and responsive decision-making in the context of rapidly changing circumstances with elected mayors and cabinet systems of governments. Secondly, levitating the quality of local democracy is yet another way in which a city can seek to gain an edge and add value to their activities as it improves their international credentials as desired and boasts decent places in which to live, work and invest.

It has been demonstrated that competitive cities usually come about through the metaphoric process of amalgamation of smaller local authorities and rationalised urban governance. In recent years, 'cluster strategies' have become a prevalent economic development approach among state and local policymakers and economic development practitioners. The approach of clustering, replicated from firms to local authorities, is a governments' response to creating viable local economies that will in turn boost the social welfare of citizens. However, Turok

and Watson (2001) contend that spatial integration has proven more complex for amalgamating cities. In the Cape Town case study conducted, they found that the absence of regulatory reform and coherent urban planning policies has perpetuated an increased unequal and fragmented spatial development.

It is the challenge therefore, of the contemporary South African planner to advocate for a legislative reform as a starting point - taking into account the segregated planning approach of the country. These are theories drawn from various schools of thought, which detail the pre-conditions for creating competitive cities from spatial, socio-economic, and political interpretations. The South African analysis indicates willingness to move local government towards city government level. While the benefits are appealing, the underlying challenges cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER THREE

3. The West Rand District Municipality and its Quest for Competitiveness

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the West Rand District municipality as a case study for this research. The selection of West Rand district as a case study has largely been informed by the recent statements of intent by the leadership of the district to establish a Unicity. The bold statements by the leadership are taken into the context of the broader Gauteng province, wherein already three metros have been established (Tshwane, Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni). What is of significance is that the West Rand has followed the band wagon of establishing a metro as a city development strategy similarly to the metros mentioned. These metros of Gauteng have gained an alluring appeal in terms of economic development, urban form and national and international stature. The West Rand is the new kid on the block and is characterised by the existence of independent local authorities that are still grappling with issues of improving service delivery and sustaining economic development.

In order to understand the rationale behind the effort of transforming the West Rand into a competitive city, it is important to evaluate how South African urban centres have evolved from separate local authorities and moved towards singular unities. From an international level, it has been enunciated that in the current millennium, human progress will be driven by metropolitanisation that will provide maximum equity, efficiency and quality of life. Agnotti (1993) attested to this notion by asserting that metropolitan governance had a potential to promote equitable land distribution, rational spatial planning, access to services and fair collection of taxes. Agnottis' views are supported by Turok (2012) about the rapid growth of urban population in the world where, by 2007, half of the world's population 3.3 billion people were living in urban areas. He states that a further 500 million people will be urbanised in the next five years. He projects that 60% of the world's population will be urbanised by 2030.

With the increasing record of urban growth marked by the trend of emerging city regions, megacities and metropolis, there has been a parallel shift in urban governance to the expansion of urban centres.

South Africa has reduced the number of municipalities from 824 to 278 through amalgamations and the formation of eight metropolitan cities. According to *The Times Live* online article by Penwell Dlamini (16th October 2013), the new demarcation process will result into Gauteng having an additional metro from the Emfuleni and Midvaal local municipalities merger together with Sedibeng district. Creating competitive cities in the form of metropolitan models in South Africa has been supported by policy frameworks such as the South African Constitution of 1996 and the Local Government White Paper of 1998, as well as the Municipal Structures Act of 2000 (Nyalunga:2006).

With this background, the first section considers comparative advantages of the district by assessing the geographical location, the strategic endowments as well as the socio-economical dynamics. There is indication of resilience in some economic sectors while mining shows a decline - contrary to its predominant positioning in the past. The West Rand has an uneven picture with regards to service delivery that can be attributed to the varying levels of income and revenue collections by the local authorities.

The second section analyses the political discourse in relation to party politics and the dialogues around the development of Vision 2016 where there is unwavering dissent from the opposition parties, as well as concerns around the participation of the citizenry. Finally, as the transformation process would require an evolution of institutional arrangements, a critical evaluation for alternatives of administrative and governance model for the district. Therefore, a suggestion to embrace the third way model to harness the private style of management without abandoning the traditional public service management methods is most relevant for the envisaged Unicity.

3.2. Situational Location of the West Rand District

The West Rand District Municipality boasts historical discoveries of natural resources such as gold since the 1800's. The official *West Rand Tourism* website (2012/08/27) highlights the places of prime interest and heritage such as the Cradle of Humankind. Hence, the district is dubbed the 'human origin' due to the discoveries of ancient human fossils dating back millions of years ago. It is a fairly sparsely populated area with captivating scenery and landmarks that create a niche for tourist attractions. Undoubtedly, this natural pristine and heritage site has formed a cornerstone for the tourism and agricultural strategies as these form part of the competitive features for the district.

The West Rand District Municipality has a municipal boundary which is located in the south-western peripheral part of the Gauteng province, adjacent to the south of the City of Johannesburg Metro, and is linked to the North West province. As a category C municipality, it encompasses four local municipalities, namely Mogale City Local Municipality, Randfontein Local Municipality, Westonaria Local Municipality and the Merafong Local Municipality, altogether covering 4,095 km² of the land (IDP: 2011/13). The locality of the district gives the competitive edge as it lies on the pristine open fields with great potential in the agricultural and tourism sector. It is also at the axis point of major transport networks which links the district with the rest of Gauteng and its neighboring province. The local municipalities offer different niches in terms of goods and services. However, they also display similar characteristics in terms of having large dwelling settlements with few central business districts.

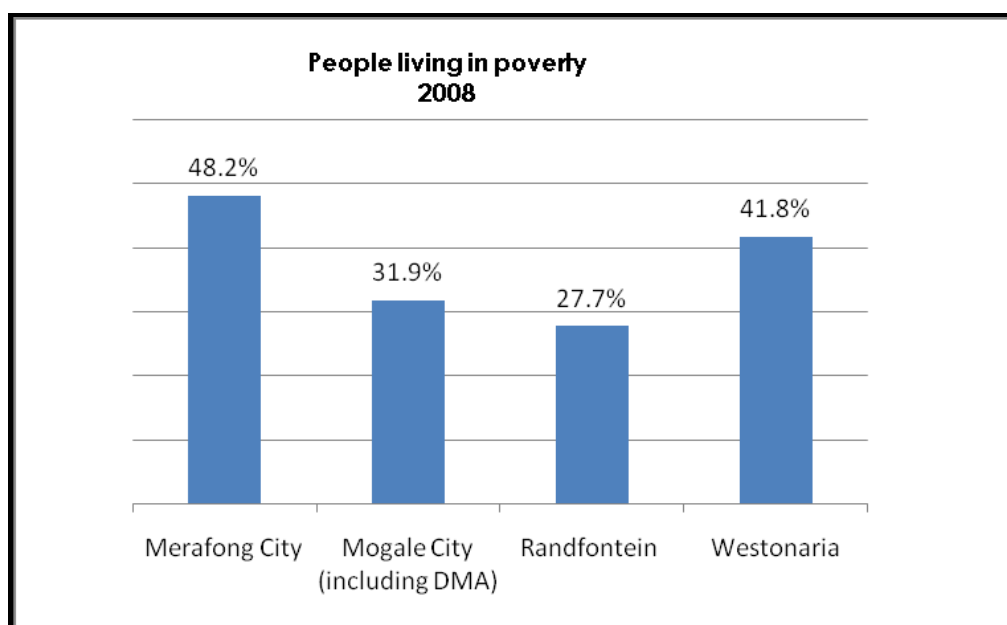
3.3. The Socio-Economic Overview

The 2010/11 West Rand District Annual Report (2011) gives a socio-economic picture wherein, according to the Global Insight statistics, the population figures were 813 487 for the district. Broken down into local municipalities' terms, Merafong contributes 27% of the population; Mogale City contributes 43%, Randfontein 17% whilst Westonaria contributes 13% of the total regional population. In terms of the racial and gender balances, the Africans constitute 80% of the population of the region, Whites 17%, Coloureds 2% and Asians 1%. The gender composition shows that 52% are males and 48% are females of all population groups. These facts give pointers that the majority of the population in the West Rand is of the previously disenfranchised, due to the Apartheid laws. The implications for the planners is to upscale the issues of equitable distribution of services and resources.

In terms poverty lines, Merafong local municipality is experiencing a high rate of poverty at 48, 2% followed by Westonaria at 41, 8%. This high level of poverty can be attributed to the closure of the mines in Merafong and Westonaria due to depleted natural resources. Mogale City has 31, 9% of people living in poverty and Randfontein has 27.7%. These statistics are a reflection of the historical discrimination towards economic emancipation that is largely spatially distributed in the areas where the majority of the black population resides. It further reflects economic depression due to the collapse of the economic activities that provided employment for the semi-skilled workers. The implications are that the West Rand district

must be responsive to these situations by developing spatial plans that will reverse the Apartheid architect of systematic segregation, as well as innovation that will open up new markets for new employment opportunities.

Table 2: Graph Illustrating the Poverty Lines in the West Rand District



Source: Global Insight Data (2011)

The creation of employment within the local scale is a critical factor in determining the revenue of a municipality. The levels of income give indications of the proportion of the population that would be dependent on the rebates and indigent grants. The district IDP points to a despairing picture of the income levels where Mogale City has the most number of households that are within the R0 - +/- R24 000 income bracket. The median income for the district is R2400 – a figure that indicates a level of affordability in relation to municipal services (IDP: 2011/13). The implications are that the district is faced with a pool of economically inactive population with little alternative sectors for it to revive full competitiveness with neighboring cities. Competitive cities require that a city must command a sound pool of highly-skilled labour to be active in innovation and knowledge sectors in order to increase a competitive edge. The low level of income increases the pressure on the local authorities to generate revenues for service delivery which may result to low levels in the quality of life. Furthermore, the lack of revenue also suggests strains in financing the major infrastructural capital projects that can serve as steady enablers for economic activities.

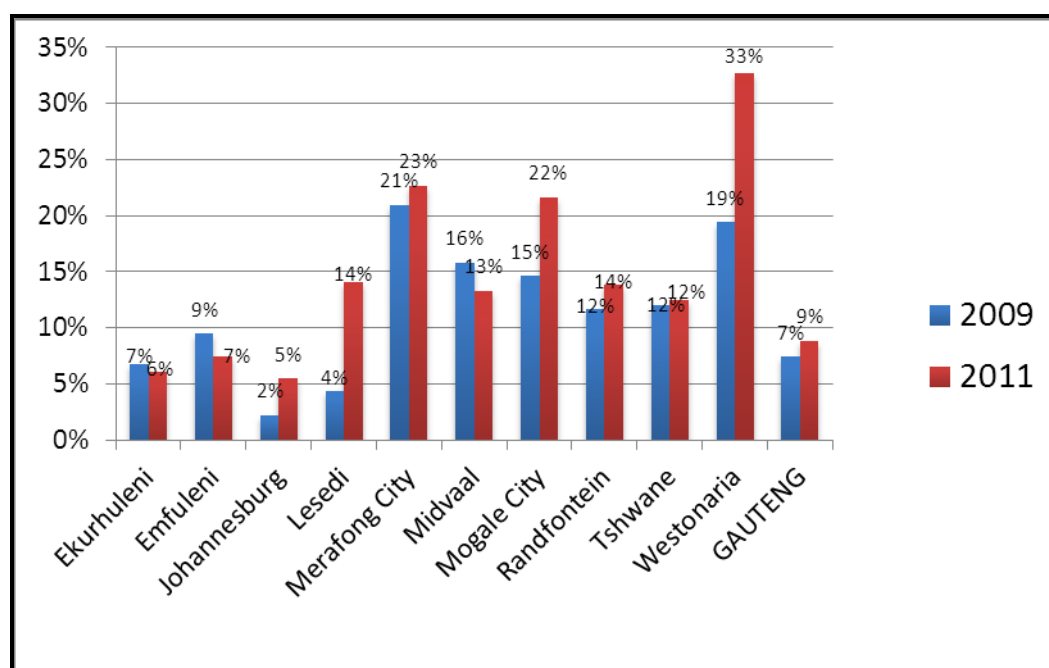
3.4. The Service Delivery Status Quo

The West Rand District seems to be faring fairly well in terms of service delivery. The analysis within the 2011/16 Integrated Development Plan specifying the levels of access to water, electricity, sanitation, housing and health services indicate a satisfactory picture. The water and electricity figures show satisfactory supply figures where Randfontein is at 66 % on water within the dwellings. The worst case scenario on water supply in dwellings is recorded to be from Merafong and Westonaria, totaling 1%. The overall access to electricity per household is an estimated 300 00 00 out of formal settlements (IDP: 2011/13).

However, the IDP document of the district contains some unfavorable information in the provision of housing and sanitation. Housing provision shows some disparities where Mogale City, Merafong and Westonaria all respectively indicate a high level of informal settlements. In relation to sanitation, what is glaringly disappointing is the existence of the bucket system – a system declared improper for the human dignity in South Africa by the then President Thabo Mbeki in 2007 (African National Congress, 2007). The prevalence of the bucket system is the highest in Merafong (1050), Mogale City (915), Randfontein (239) and Westonaria (40) respectively (IDP: 2011/13).

The Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO) conducted a Gauteng Quality of Life survey (2012) with the aim of soliciting levels of satisfaction by the Gauteng residents. The perceptual views indicated that Westonaria was the highest by far in the province with 33% of refuse collection failures (see *table below*). In the survey, Westonaria and Randfontein were part of the sample of Gauteng municipalities that participated. Randfontein consistently showed the levels of satisfaction in relation to dwelling, access to water, billing of services, roads and electricity across the spectrum (52% - 80%). With this perspective, it can be presumed that the quality of life for most residents in the district still needs some improvement. It is also an indication of unearthed challenge of access to property ownership and migration. In line with the determinants of competitive advantages, the soft conditions theory suggests that the existence of favourable living conditions work as an attraction to retain diverse skilled labour due to the availability of amenities. With the levels of access to basic services and housing conditions, more work would be necessary to create a place of choice to live and work for the necessary skilled labour.

Table 3: A Table Indicating the Proportions of Waste not Collected by a Municipality in Gauteng



Source: Gauteng Global City Region Quality of Life Survey Report (2012)

In light of the socio-economic and service delivery analysis of the district, it is evident that the competitiveness of the West Rand is based on the fragile and depleting mining sector while cushioned by manufacturing and financial sectors. As it was mentioned in the regional competitiveness theory, a region relies on the natural endowments for strategic economic positioning. The latitude of competitiveness against other regions will depend on the resurrection of the collapsing sectors as well as exploration of other innovative discoveries. Competitive cities need to produce a sound quality of life through employment opportunities and the efficient rendering of services. The graphical illustrations though depict a concerning picture in relation to the distribution of income and service delivery. The disparities of income levels within the local municipalities presuppose a formidable case for the amalgamation so that service delivery is rationalised.

The socio-economic character and spatial form of the West Rand district closely borders on definitions of 'polycentrism'. According to Parr (2003), the polycentric urban region refers to a set of neighbouring, but spatially separate urban centres, existing as some identifiable entities. These regions are deemed economically competitive and regarded as desirable organising framework for public policy intervention. The distinct factor for PUR is the cooperative relation amongst the neighbouring centres where they all have easy access to

each other for trade, consumption and movement of labour force. Whilst polycentricity can be easily assimilated to the creation comparative advantages in a region, Meijers et al (2007) argue that polycentrism is a territorial cohesion. Thus, the creation of nodal points, precincts and modal inter-connectors are deliberate policy interventions that can dismantle the inequalities bestowed by polarised economic hubs.

Therefore, the relationship of the local authorities - Westonaria, Mogale City, Randfontein and Merafong enjoy with each other at this point, is a symbiosis similar to the features of functional polycentricity. This is demonstrated by the existence of functional economic nodes that are interlinked. These local authorities similarly espouse functional connectedness in relation to the economic sectors as well as other commercial activities. It is demonstrated above that the urban centres in the West Rand district have not developed in an equivalent manner. Disparities are evident in terms of population development, economic growth, accessibility, productivity, average income development, accessibility to public and private services. Although not explicitly expressed in the jargons and definitive terms of Vision 2016, the elements of polycentricity can be traced.

To develop a policy argument for polycentricity, West Rand district asserts that Vision 2016 is partly aimed at the distribution of economically relevant functions over the urban system in such a way that the urban hierarchy is flattened in a spatial and socio-economical balanced manner. Locating the West Rand within the broader context of the Gauteng Global City Region, it can be affirmed that the district forms part of a network based relations of global city region hinterlands. According to Sassen (1991), global city regions are urban systems consisting of different hierarchical layers. Within this system she concludes, higher-order cities are enclosed by a greater hinterland than lower-order cities where smaller towns can also be part of a bigger city's hinterland. Part of this argument is the idea that smaller towns provide less goods and services than bigger cities. As such, supplies of specialised goods and services in smaller towns have to be supplemented by supplies in bigger cities. Therefore, the relationship which the district has with other well-developed cities such as Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni and Tshwane marks a shift from rudimentary, agricultural or a habitat reserve to more a defined economic hub buffer to the highly concentrated cities.

3.5. The Political Landscape of the West Rand District

The political climate of the West Rand can be considered stable, with the exception of few cases of volatile confrontations. The political representation is dominantly from the current ruling party, the African National Congress. The opposition parties are largely the Democratic Alliance, the Congress of the People and The Peoples Independent Civic Organization. The Freedom Front Plus and other political parties are represented in the minority (Independent Electoral Commission: 2011). The picture represents a democratic process of representation and an opportunity to uphold the principles of good governance. As an example, these principles have been displayed in the calls to account for expenditures on municipal budgets as well as vigorous debates in strategies (WRDM: 2012).

Table 4: West Rand District 2011 Local Government Election Results

Municipality	ANC	COPE	DA	IFP	VF+	Others	Total
Mogale City	41	1	23	1	1	1	68
Randfontein	27	1	16	0	0	0	44
Westonaria	23	1	4	1	0	2	31
Merafong	41	1	11	1	0	2	56
Total	132	4	90	3	1	5	235

Source: Independent Electoral Commission Municipal Elections Report (2011)

The opposition parties have been vocal in the media platforms and openly resist the principle of amalgamation. The Freedom Front Plus (FFP) in particular, has expressed its opposition to the amalgamation of local municipalities. They are opposing the demarcation of the municipal boundaries by incorporating parts of Sedibeng and Johannesburg that were proposed by the former MEC of Local Government and Housing – Humphrey Memezi (*FFP official website* 09/2012).

The counter-argument by the council, particularly the mayor, was that such sentiments undermine the democratic consultative processes that was undertaken and ultimately led to the majority of parties consenting to the Vision 2016. The Mayor of the district reflected that “the vision of transformation was part of the ANC manifesto and therefore becomes a council priority with buy-in from other parties”. The mayor also indicated that the opposition parties

are represented in the Transformation Committees therefore reflecting a concerted effort for the change (*Looklocal website*: 2012).

3.6. Considerations for a Local Governance Model

In the South African context, global forces have an influence in the way our municipalities operate. The local government sphere has followed suit to adopt international solutions to problems of inadequacy in generating revenue, inefficient service delivery and to address poor public service management. The current institutional governance model of the West Rand District is an executive mayoral system. According to this model, the municipal council rests its executive powers to the mayor candidate who in turn appoints the members of the mayoral committees. The executive also plays an oversight role over the administrative arm of council (Hologram: 2003). As such, the respective local municipalities and the district are represented by the executive mayors and the mayoral committees of various portfolios.

The administrative function is led by the municipal managers who ultimately account for the administrative duties of the municipality. The administration is composed of various line functions that execute specific service delivery portfolios and internal operations. The administration embraces the new public management model. In essence, the key trends that are encapsulated by the new public management model are: breaking up monolithic bureaucracies into agencies; devolving budgets and financial control; organisational unbundling; downsizing; and, separating production and provision functions in the public sector (Hologram: 2003). The new public management model does find resonance with the West Rand District as it puts the district in the neo-liberal context. The district echoes the principles of this model by its strong promotion of private enterprise. The district is also playing a facilitatory role by creating an enabling environment for the free operation of market forces. For example, the infrastructural development along the corridors and other transport and economic nodes is a way of setting fertile grounds for creating opportunities for private enterprise.

The new public management model is based on the assumption that a bureaucratic culture is not at all bad for governance since it can be used effectively through co-operation with other public agencies (Schedler and Proeller:2011). This model seeks to strengthen the hand of the state in public service on the premise that entrepreneurial approaches are inadequate for managing the public sector. The model argues this point on the grounds that the public and

private sectors are two unique entities (in terms of their objective and agenda) and hence need to be managed differently. However, it does not advocate rejecting the private sector. Rather, it seeks to involve the private sector through market testing and the contracting out of services through various forms of public-private partnerships.

In view of the descriptive analysis above, it can be concluded that the new public management model sees the local authority as an agent committed to the effective and equitable provision of public services. Although still hierarchically structured, this model places particular emphasis on authority and leadership in the management of projects, and on inter-departmental cooperation. The city managers have a stronger hand in the co-ordination of departmental activities than in the conventional traditional model. Co-ordination also occurs between political committees. Thus, communication and interaction is not only vertical but horizontal and more integrated. This can also mean the rationalisation of departments and political committees by modifying and making more optimal use of already established systems through streamlining, restructuring and re-grouping of service units (Heady: 2001).

As the ensemble of the most suitable urban system ensues, the West Rand District is left with a mammoth task of defining the administrative and governance structures. In the plethora of metropolitan governance models available, each large city must be tailored to its specific situation and national context. The challenge is to produce appropriate forms of governance, which optimise the potential of a given urban region. These must be flexible enough to adapt to rapid economic and social change. The careful selection of an appropriate model is pivotal, as it will define the speed at which services are delivered. The relevant governance model determines the participation of the citizens, business, and civil community as well as the positioning of the city for competitiveness.

In setting the basics for identifying a relevant model, Slack (2007) shares his ideas on the criteria for designing governance models in the World Bank publication series. His ideas necessitate a balance between the economic efficacies versus the principles of responsiveness and accountability. He states that the '*economies of scale*' element advocates for the minimal spend per unit cost in rendering a municipal service whilst provision remains at maximum. He critiques this element by indicating that some services are inherently too costly due to large territorial or convoluted bureaucratic jurisdictions. The economies of scale in

governance model context allude to the rendering of services in a centralised point that holds control and strategic leadership while may be appropriately distributed through district or satellite centres. An example of this scenario are the Thusong Centres (national government), Customer Care Centres (Ekurhuleni Metro) and Peoples Centres (City of Johannesburg) decentralising the provision of public and municipal services (GCIS: 2013). This scenario is eminent in the West Rand district as currently, the provision of services has proven too costly and unsustainable at varying scales in all the respective local municipalities. A proposition of rationalising of services and sharing of revenue in order to address the service failures is most appropriate to address this matter.

There is a consideration of '*externalities*', or spill overs (in costs or benefits), in specific services such as roads networks primary health facilities. This is when a particular service that is provided by a municipality A derives usage benefits for municipality B, without any financial compensation or major trade-offs, or negatively impacting on the supplier of a service at worst. A governance model needs to take into account the territorial and infrastructural positioning of the city or region. The one way of addressing this matter is to instigate intergovernmental, cross municipal tariff transfers, or encourage voluntary cooperation amongst municipalities. The case of Randfontein Local Municipality demonstrates this point where a road network (Main Reef road) transcends through its Central Business District (CBD). It opens up a spill over benefit for commuters from Johannesburg right through to Carltonville in Merafong Local Municipality, while bearing the costs of maintenance and traffic control services for Randfontein. An amalgamation process in line with Vision 2016 is one response towards internalisation of externalities.

The element of '*equity*' seeks to restore redistributive justice - a fair and equal share of municipal services. The West Rand district leadership acknowledges the unequal distribution of incomes therefore spiralling perpetual unequal access to services (*see section 3.2*). A single form of a municipality envisaged in Vision 2016 proposes a single coffer that will rationally allocate services according to need and less on affordability.

'*Accessibility and accountability*' are intertwined elements of a governance model that seeks to promote the accessibility of constituency leaders and access to information municipal processes, plans and procedures so that the citizenry can influence the local policy development. The establishment local forums and technologies for interaction leads to

informed and participatory municipal planning. The extent of access, however, may be determined by the size and magnitude of the jurisdiction. Accountability should be entrenched in a local governance model by opening avenues for extensive scrutiny in the use of public funds and resources.

The local responsiveness means that the local government actors need to be sensitive to the needs and demands of the communities they serve. This may be through policy reviews as a method to evaluate relevance and the impact of said policies. Good local governance models require that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders and respond within acceptable timeframes. Closely related to this is the prevalence of effectiveness and efficiency that accentuates the use of state resources and the preservation of the limited resources.

3.7. Conclusion

In view of the analysis of the West Rand district, it suffices that there are socio-economic and spatial disparities in terms of income, uneven access to services and perpetual apartheid spatial architect. The current situation implies a crucial need for the implementation of urban planning policies that promote inclusivity and address the structural economic imbalances that are often based on racial lines. Unemployment seems to be increasing with the collapse of the core sectors in the region. In order to increase competitiveness, the West Rand district leadership needs to utilise the available labour capital by identifying new sectors through innovation. This means cutting barriers from the conservative markets into information technology, environmental sustainability and scientific discoveries as examples.

The generally low sources of revenue suggest that the district may need to introduce new forms of raising financial capital through various revenue streams. The financial sustainability is important for increasing competitiveness as the provision of efficient goods and services such as bulk infrastructure to waste collections are one of the determinants for competitive cities. Thus, the quality of infrastructure increases the chances of attracting business investments while efficient services may increase the quality of life generally.

Local government in South Africa has gone through a lot of administrative restructuring and the West Rand district is currently presented with a task of implementing the suitable administrative model that can optimally yield efficient service delivery. The new public

management model is an ideal option as it espouses the good governance principles of sharing power and promoting participation as well as innovatively seeks ways to generate revenue. As such, the West Rand demonstrates a stable political climate as there is diversity of political representation in council. In terms of good governance, opposition parties are instrumental in playing a 'watch dog' role for accountability and healthy debates when decisions are made. In the context of Gauteng city region, it is clear that the district plays an urban hub in the peripheral sense, while it maintains a symbiotic relationship with the urban centres that are located within its boundaries. Cities have also gone beyond being sites of production, but emerge as sites of consumption for business, entertainment, leisure and centres for innovative excellence.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Towards Vision 2016

4.1. Introduction

This chapter directly responds to the research by applying the critical research questions that will solicit the answers on the implications of creating competitive cities. The research questions are robust and depart from the point of seeking to understand the motives and the events which have led to the creation of Vision 2016. In line with the understanding of the prominent features of competitive cities, this chapter filters the elements of competitiveness such as in-bound competitive advantages, innovation and sound infrastructure development. This chapter points out that Vision 2016 largely remains a high level development discussion although it has been presented in the public platforms. Whilst the amalgamation process has not gone too far to produce evidence on costs and benefits and the trickledown effect to community beneficiation, the strategic documents reveal the noble intentions of rationalising resources and revenue for equitable share in service delivery. The chapter concludes by indicating a clear intent of moving towards amalgamation by the leadership. While the key major objectives for the amalgamation are stated, there is opportunity to formulate a concrete holistic economic development strategy that will reflect vigour towards a competitive city.

4.2. Why the Vision 2016?

Like some major cities, the process of becoming a metropolitan municipality has always been necessitated by some pressure ranging from maximising the generation of revenue, optimising organisational arrangements, or consciously aligning to the holistic strategic plans of regionalisation. Just as the period of 2002 marked difficult times of transformation for the City of Johannesburg when the eGoli 2002 Plan came about to respond to issues of resuscitating the depleted revenues, un-coordinated institutional arrangements and volatile political climate (Allan, et al: 2001), likewise, the West Rand District is a new kid on the block that seeks to respond largely to the demands of global economy where it needs to compete for opportunities, skills and resources through optimisation of its niches. Firstly, the district needs to find its competitive role against the major metros in terms of outputs into the Gauteng economy. Secondly, there are political pressures that are driven at a high political level to drive the manifesto of the ruling current ruling party. Thirdly, the municipality is under pressure to devise efficient means to ensure that the developmental agenda is fulfilled

through innovative means. Henceforth, the Vision 2016 was conceived as a reaction towards the aforementioned factors.

The mobilising and augmenting of resources for an equitable provision of services is a generally echoed reasoning for the Vision 2016. This is informed by the service delivery failures in waste collection, water and electricity distribution as well as sanitation. The West Rand has been hit hard by the decline in the dominant mining sector that resulted to retrenchments and casual employment conditions for residents. This has affected the revenue base while the culture of non-payment for services has not drastically changed. “It is so rife that even some of the municipal officials and office bearers themselves have a tendency of inconsistent payment trends” (Interview: 1st October 2012). A respondent reflected how revenue collection officials were surprised that a top official had taken it upon herself to update her municipal account as non-payment was a staggered culture.

However, the West Rand also sees itself taking pivotal role in the greater development of the Gauteng Province. The Gauteng City Region is one of the driving factors for the transformation as it envisages a single, unified and coordinated process of all municipalities within the province. Regionalisation requires that Gauteng must possess clusters of production in a specialised form. Consequentially, the West Rand claims that it is ready to position itself as a ‘Green City’. This view is stated in the Green IQ strategy (2012), a strategy that is positioned as bedrock for the competitiveness of the district and states that West Rand district has determined to entrench the ‘green’ economic development that will deliver on the social and environmental sustainable impact. To achieve this, the strategy delineates on a myriad of partnerships with provincial and national government departments towards the creation of green excellence, green skills and business methods that are sympathetic to green principles.

4.3. The Conception of the Vision 2016 – ‘The Unicity’

In the year 2007, a feasibility study was conducted to assess the viability of the West District of becoming a Metro (WRDM 2010/12). The recommendation of the study was that West Rand District Municipality can either amalgamate into a category A municipality, or a Category B1 Municipality (Mini Metro). The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 outlines that a Category A municipality is a metropolitan area with characteristics of dense population, diverse economic activities as well as extensive social and infrastructural urban development.

Category B1 is a secondary city with a potential of becoming a metro yet is under the jurisdiction of a district municipality.

The intention of transforming the district into a metro was endorsed by the West Rand African National Congress Regional Conference in 2008. The decision was also adopted by the respective district and local councils in consultation with opposition political parties by 2010. Subsequently, a Transformation Stakeholder meeting was held in November 2011 whereby the 2016 Vision was discussed and a buy-in from the stakeholders was secured.

Figure 3: Vision 2016 Strategic Review Session held in August, 2011.



Mayors, senior administrative and managers of Westonaria, Mogale City, Randfontein, Merafong local municipalities gathered to participate in the review session.

The process of crafting the vision 2016 strategic framework began in 2010, wherein a preliminary strategic workshop was held. The purpose was to develop strategies towards transforming the district into a Metro by 2016. The workshop led to the successful crafting of the intended objectives that were outlined during the State of the District Address by the District Executive Mayor Mpho Nawa, listing the following:

- Merge into a single B1 Municipality by 2016;
- Work towards becoming a Unicity (metropolitan form of government) by 2025;
- Improved service delivery
- Standardisation of services through integration
- Improved resource management (economies of scale) in the region
- Support of the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals
- Support of the goals of Gauteng Global City Region

4.4. The Transformation Aspirations within the Legislative Framework

One of the milestones that have been achieved is the submission of the districts' proposal to the Demarcation Board before the cut-off date in December 2011. The collective leadership has been convinced of succeeding in the application to be granted a metro status. According to the 2016 Vision Strategic Framework Review document (2011), the view is informed by the outcomes of the feasibility study that evaluated the West Rand District Municipality on fifty five criteria over six evaluation areas. The district scored 85% on the set criteria. In comparison with other recently declared metros (Buffalo City and Mangaung), the sentiments are that the district is in a much more favourable position if the issues of densification and revenue base are to be considered.

However, at the time of conducting research, the status quo of the application has been halted due to contentious issues of legalities and re-demarcation of boundaries. The Municipal Structures Act of 2000 defines the composition and status of three categories of municipalities wherein category A represents the metropolitan councils, category B refers to the local municipalities and category C defines the structure and composition of the district municipalities. The West Rand is currently a category B municipality and has filed an application requesting the 'unicipity or category B1' status as the formation of a unicity is nowhere defined and accommodated in the legal precepts in South Africa.

Currently, Section 12 of the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 also defines the process of granting the status of the municipalities. According to the Act, the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) of Local Government and Housing in the province in question can only grant the status officially after the Demarcation Board processes have been satisfied. In terms of Section 12 (3), the notice by the MEC needs to specify the category of a municipality that the applicant wishes to fall under. The notice must state the type of the municipality it wishes to be declared – whether a local, district or a metro. There needs to be delineation of the proposed new boundaries as well as the name of the prospective municipality. With this prescriptive process, there seem to be a challenge in satisfying the set criteria that implies delays in realising the Vision 2016 targets.

In view of the above implications, the various options have been proposed in order to achieve the metro status. One proposal was the incorporation of some parts of the City of Johannesburg Metro and Sedibeng District to form part of the West Rand district. However,

the proposal was withdrawn and further options were raised by the Department of Local Government and Housing (DLG&H: 2012). The other options that the district had submitted to the Municipal Demarcation Board included the merging of two local municipalities while retaining the other two as well as the district or merge all four local municipalities and retain the district. Drawing facts from the legal prescripts, it can be argued that a proposed single category B1 (one local municipal conurbation – the ‘Unicity’) cannot exist without the district municipality, according to the legal framework.

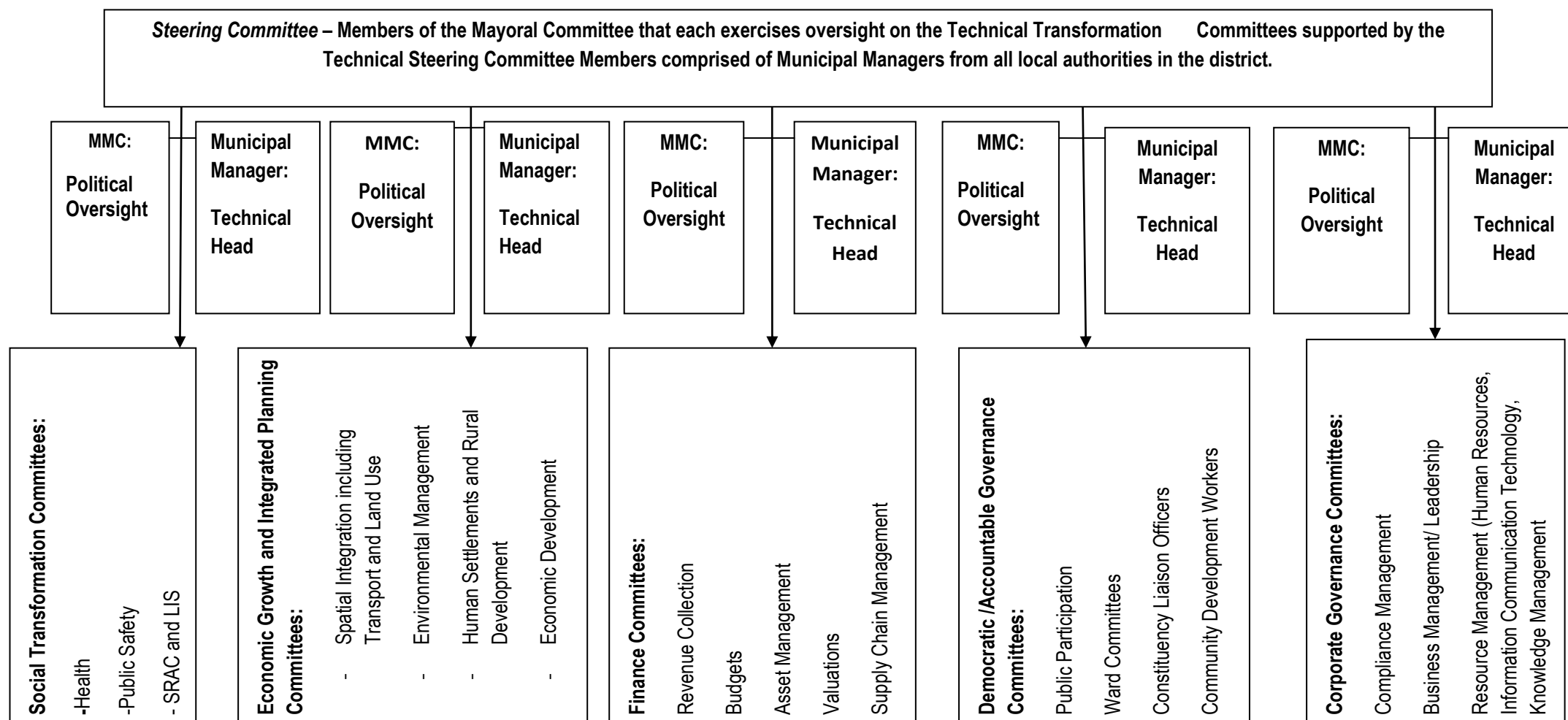
If the 2016 target remains a critical milestone for administrative rationalisation, it would be prudent to bid for a metropolitan (category A) status. Alternatively, amendments to the Municipal Structures Act of 2000 (Sections 2 and 12) would be necessary to accommodate the B1 application. The district leadership is confronted with the legal dilemma that poses a challenge in achieving the set Vision 2016. The leadership would have to engage the provincial government of Gauteng critically in order to eliminate the legal challenges.

4.5. The Structures and Processes Established to Drive Vision 2016

The Revised 2016 Vision Strategic Framework was adopted by Council after the strategic planning session held in August 2011 (WRDM IDP: 2012). The strategic framework articulates the structures, the lines of accountability, as well as the phases for the delivery of the vision. The structures are composed of two arms – the political and technical committees. At the political level, all mayors form the Transformation Committee that is supported by the Steering Committee comprising Members of Mayoral Committees. Their mandate is to exercise the political oversight, lobbying, and accountability to the political structures. At the technical level, there are five transformation sub-committees, each headed by the Municipal Manager of all five municipalities in the West Rand District. They report to the intergovernmental meetings and ultimately to the Chairperson of the Transformation Committee, Executive Mayor Mpho Nawa. The Strategic Framework document (2011) outlines the committees as reflected in the diagram below. The unitary participation and representation by all local municipalities both at political and administrative leadership indicates the commitment of all role players towards the new paradigm of amalgamated and central leadership. This is despite the existing leadership and administrative structure that permits the exercise of independence, authority and accountability of respective authorities to their areas of jurisdiction. For instance, local authorities are still holding their council meetings, passing council bound policies, preparing Integrated Development Plans, budgets

and determine their development objectives. This is according to the establishments of Municipal Structures Act of 1998 that governs the establishment, powers and functions and dissolution of councils. The current arrangements result in the respective authorities often competing and resorting to misaligned development objectives such as housing and transport networks. They also incur indirect impacts of civil unrest, unemployment and sporadic population influxes. However, governance is closest to the people and rendering of services are within acceptable scales.

Table 5: The Established Structures to Coordinate the Planning Process for Vision 2016



4.6. The Intentions and Objectives of the Vision 2016

4.6.1. Harmonisation of Resources for improved Service Delivery

According to the findings, one of the key elements that the vision sought to achieve is the harmonisation of resources. This objective entails the ‘mobilisation of resources equitably in order to rationalise service delivery’ as the respondent from the district Mayor’s office articulated (Middle Manager: 1st October 2012). The mobilisation of resources will be facilitated by a single tier administrative process wherein financial allocations are centralised and redistributed equitably towards the poorest sections of the district. The notion of equitably sharing of resources is a response to the high rate of service delivery failures by smaller municipalities.

It is envisaged that the smaller nucleus model of municipalities is no longer viable and sustainable in relation to services and the ‘bail out’ option is for conformation into a broader regionalisation. Harish Jain (2010:67) attests that “...service delivery remains the concern of the respective municipality regardless of the areas of competency. At most, it is said that the service delivery protests are caused by the slow pace of delivery rather than non-delivery...”

The respondent indicated that the services of even hospitals remain their business. A specific intervention was the calling of management of hospitals and health services to account on the failures of their centers which resulted into recommendations for improvements. Harmonisation also extends to the common approach when looking at land use management. A land audit is currently being conducted to adequately determine land ownership and acquisition. This is also parallel to the human settlement strategy that will begin to redirect the settlement patterns.

To cite examples, Merafong and Westonaria local municipalities are quoted by the high ranking respondent to have been experiencing a decline in their revenue base. In correlation to the slight decline of the mining sector as well as untapped agricultural and tourism potential, the two local municipalities have significantly failed to raise their revenue base to finance the delivery of services. The respondent further volunteered information that the district as a whole, currently largely relies on the grants of the equitable shares from the national fiscus and loans from the lending institutions. “...Randfontein local municipality currently owes unspecified millions to Eskom while a loan to the tune of R90 million was made by the Mogale City local municipality”.

One of the primary mandates of local government, according to the South African Constitution of 1996 - Section 152 (1), is to provide basic services in a sustainable manner. Section 153 also imposes the developmental duties of structuring and managing its administration and budgeting as well as planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community. In sight of this clause, the respondents felt that the amalgamation for a single revenue base and redistribution is in line with the tenets of the supreme law of the country.

On the 2nd of October 2012, when a seemingly well-prepared and an attentive high ranking official honoured an appointment to be interviewed prior to the high level meeting with the Executive Mayor, he eloquently expressed the needs for what he called the "...optimisation of the economies of scale". He cited a scenario to support the rationalisation of resources for efficient service delivery wherein the unicity would be given an opportunity to purchase bulk infrastructure such as water and electricity with a single voice and negotiate for competitive tariffs. Twenty odd minutes later just before the end of the interview, the Honorable Mayor entered the reception area and enthusiastically greeted everyone as he preceded to the boardroom with the Technical Transformation Committee champions. The demeanor of the individuals and punctuality denoted dedication and a sense of urgency.

At the time of political recess, a Member of the Mayoral Committee was already hard at work consulting other people at the dawn of morning. Wasting no time, he charged to answer the questions with frank acknowledgement of some shortcomings. Of interest in relation to harmonisation, the respondent made mention of the value in the skills transfer to the functional areas where there are gaps. He was of the view that all municipalities in the district do have the internal capacity to deliver the services. However, the respondent acknowledged that as the envisaged metro grows, "New resources and expertise may be required externally to address the new demands", he said. In sight, one was not privileged to observe the high ranking meeting as the progress matters on the Transformation committees was being deliberated.

4.6.2. Standardisation of Services Through Integration

The notion of integration is explained as an internal management process that requires a creation of relatively large number of relatively autonomous service provision units (Leach et al: 1994:76). Similarly, the West Rand intends to expand on this notion with the intention of ultimately having several functional departments that will transcend throughout all local municipal areas with one central point of reporting.

Currently the municipalities have their own departments with their own budget and operational plans as well as respective leadership. However, a model of ‘shared services’ is currently being tested. The Supply Chain Management (SCM) is currently a shared service between the district and Westonaria local Municipality. The recently appointed Manager accounts on a 60/40 percent on both councils. Standardisation of the SCM function arose when a vacancy opened at the District level. It was resolved that an available capacity from a local municipality must champion the ‘piloting’ of a shared service. The significance of integrated business planning is to arrive at West Rand being competitive city in a single tier management. Therefore, integration is aimed at generating a holistic understanding of key performance drivers and optimally using resources for maximum impact.

To date, the Manager is under the process of harmonising the supply chain policies, integration of the supplier database and management of staff, both at the district and local levels. Perhaps critical to this function, is the improvement in the creation of economies of scales by centrally procuring in bulk for goods and services that may be required. The Internal Audit functions at the district and local level, as well as Human Resources, are similarly setting in motion the concept of integration. The Corporate Transformation Committee was given the directive to develop a Shared Service Manual. She acknowledged what she called “...the mammoth task with the absence of a specialised skill of organisational transformation management renders the process a trial and error” (Interview: 2nd October 2012). However, enthusiasm and identification of opportunities for career growth is inevitable. It was observed during the opportune time immediately after the staff meeting that the staff is fairly young and vocal personnel who see themselves as part of the exciting change.

A rather dejected staff member, although curious, volunteered to be interviewed at a local municipality and pointed out that the talks of transformation is currently discussed at a higher

level. He was vaguely informed that the Vision 2016 will bring about integration of departments. According to him, the absence of dialogue and outreach to staff is posing perceptions that jobs will be lost. He lamented that in his view, the re-organisation of departments has the potential of rendering other personnel “displaced, redundant and conflict of salary levels” (Junior Staff Member: 3rd October 2012).

The relevant matter in this aspect relates to the remuneration packages in the Metros. It has been widely reported in the media that the officials, particularly the municipal managers tend to be paid exorbitant salaries. An undisclosed consultant in the development planning field with credentials of being part of crafting the national and provincial planning law as well as the Gauteng Planning Commission (Development Planning Expert: 27th March 2012) concurred with these sentiments. He cited Ekurhuleni Metro as one example in which the establishment of a Metro has yielded relatively high salary payout to high ranking staff as a trend. However, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) undertook an exercise to verify the salary amounts against the figures published in the media. The outcomes led to the discrepancies between the reports and the factual findings.

One respondent, a politician who is part of the Steering Committee pointed to the need for the Change Management Strategy. The strategy will outline the process of skills re-evaluation, talent retention and attraction and ultimately the design of the future organizational structure. Acknowledging that not much has been done due to the Transformation Manager position not yet been filled, he pointed out that it is important that constant engagement with the organised labour occurs. However, one of the Mayors indicted that the processes is not yet there. He articulated that Vision 2016 is still at an embryonic stage wherein a lot of negotiations at a political level are on-going, as well as the respective committees having not completed their tasks. The current process is necessary so that all levels of leadership will merge with one voice embracing a sense of accountability and responsibility.

In juxtaposing these findings from the respondents with the concepts in the literature review, it is evident that the notion of integration of line functions into shared services resonates well with the neoliberal market principles of minimising production costs while aiming for maximum economic returns. Therefore, the use of economies of scale and integration of business functions further demonstrate that the West Rand is highly immersed in the globalised system that emphasises the efficient use of resources in order to speed up service

delivery outputs. Competitive cities command a highly skilled work force in order to invent innovative yet sustainably balanced strategies in order to stay ahead of the global competitive field. The West Rand intends to find its forte by entrenching 'green' economic approaches and social lifestyles. As a fairly new development approach, much diligence must be exercised to determine the financial and skills resources to be incurred. However, the district is placed at a strategic position in the greater scheme of Gauteng city region by comparatively having advantages on environment. Thus innate environmental and geographic landscapes sprout opportunities to be launched as a 'green hub' for the region.

4.6.3. Supporting the Gauteng Global City Region (GCR)

The Gauteng City Region is a long term vision for the Gauteng province that outlines the spatial configuration, the administrative and political coordination, as well as the key economic priorities. The respondent -middle management personnel who showed great interest in the study – explains with composure that the intentions of the GCR is a strategic development of the province that will see itself better positioned within the global economy. However, there are pre-conditions in which the province must fulfill such as creating the clusters of specialisation as sites of production across the province. Such clusters, she alluded will need to function harmoniously by complementing each other in terms of outputs thereby creating an economically viable Gauteng City Region.

The West Rand is thus seen as one of the building blocks for the city region. This is an indication that apart from the challenges of service delivery, the Vision 2016 is a result of deliberate macro-economic policy that addresses the developmental challenges in the province and the South African nation as a whole. Citing the National Development Plan (2012), there is emphasis on regional integration and cooperation that is enabled by transport infrastructure as well as utilising opportunities that lie in complementary national endowments. Politically, the Premier of Gauteng drives GCR vision and it is infiltrated through her Premiers' Coordinating Forum (a forum made up of Mayors and the Premier).

The strategic positioning of all respective metros (and districts) is injected with high priority development projects that will generate desired infrastructural development outcomes within the metros and districts. The West Rand District is currently earmarked as the 'agropolis' – a center for agricultural processing (IDP: 2011/13). It is supported by the trail of freight development. In essence, the West Rand is a strategic centre in the scheme of things.

Furthermore, a conscious attitude by the provincial departments in rendering their services such as housing, health and education is that they begin to see the districts and local municipalities in a unitary form. Therefore this requires a conscious service delivery effort that takes into account future plans such as the spatial plans and land-use management.

4.6.4. Support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

It is interesting to note that a majority of the respondents did not divulge at length on their understanding of the support to the MDGs objective. An official with a political background, who is regarded as possessing vast institutional memory, was forthcoming in providing supportive documents, as well as linking up with other key people indicated not knowing the reason for this objective. A respondent in the political office, however, justified the objective by saying that the rendering of basic services and meeting the targets in the IDP would be an ultimate contribution to the MDGs. 'Everyone in government has got the MDGs targets including the provincial government. The municipality is committed to play its part and we have the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan to prove our contribution' (Middle Management Respondent: 2nd October 2012). The interpretation of these responses suggest that the commitment to the MDGs remains rhetoric without any substantial evidence of deliberate benchmarking and continuously assessing the meeting of targets.

The commitment to the MDGs could be submerged with the conception of improving the quality of life. The goals entail some commitments that are outside the scope of local government. Therefore, an assumption is that intergovernmental forums in the district allow for systemic response to the regional delivery of MDGs. In hindsight, the mention of MDGs in the motives for transformation could be interpreted as an instrument to elevate the commitment to the quality of life. The world cities bolster their statistics on this item to push their scorings in the global indices, barometers and benchmarking for good placing in the list of good performing competitive cities.

4.6.5. The Merger of Local Municipalities with a District to Form a B1 Municipality By 2016

The concept of a merger of the local authorities and the district is informed by key critical factors. According to the Mayor of one of the local municipalities, the autonomous co-existence of the locals is no longer a viable local governance model and is not responding to the service delivery needs. He elaborates that these locals are very small in size, yet are too

close to one another – a median of twenty minutes’ drive apart from each other. So it would make sense join them for the benefits of rationalisation and integration. Secondly, the merger will fast-track the redress of the spatial Apartheid patterns by beginning to redistribute evenly the infrastructural seamless development.

Therefore, the process also requires the reconsideration of municipal boundaries. “We have no intention of expanding our municipal boundaries beyond the current district parameters. Our focus is internal; we have good relations with other bordering municipalities that we would not like to be compromised” (Mayor Respondent: 2nd October 2012). One of the achievements of note according to the respondent is the timeous application for change of status and internal boundary demarcation to the Demarcation Board. It is acknowledged however, that the current application will need to meet the legislative requirements. The intention of applying for B1 – the ‘Unicity’ was to set in motion the preparations of becoming a fully functional metro by year 2025. To date, the district has made a resubmission to the Municipal Demarcation Board for a Category A (metro) status consequent to the rejection of a B1 category (Unicity) application. This was followed by a proposal of merging Westonaria with Randfontein. However, the district rejected the proposal and advocated for a Category A status still.

The merger is without crisis and uncertainty. As the merger presupposes the dissolving of power and authority at the local level, it will ultimately mean that some Mayors and MMCs will separate their titles as a result to a move towards a singular council. The same could be said for the officials of high ranking. The reforming and reducing of the council will ensure that a lot of bureaucracy and excessive spend on salaries will be drastically reduced. The engagements with relevant stakeholders and structures can yield better common understanding such as the Premiers’ Coordinating Forum, the Department of Local Government and Housing, South African Local Government Association as well as the intention to robe in the Cities Network. These organisations are deemed relevant to render the expertise by ensuring diligence, compliance and communicating the developmental long term objectives. They are better place to facilitate lobbying for partnerships and ensuring that the institutional memory is not lost. Therefore, a pragmatic approach facilitated from a political party level must be maintained and demonstrate political maturity in order to prevent any possible in-fights.

4.7. The Requirements for Establishing a Competitive City – The Unicity

In a telephonic interview, the busy Mayor personally made the effort to confirm his availability through a Short Message Service a day after the request. In response to the question of the prerequisites that needs to be achieved in order to become a competitive region, His Worship pedantically and optimistically responds “Well, we needed to assess what is it that other metros in the province are currently not providing that we may be in possession of. By looking at our natural assets and strategic location, the notion of the green economy became an aspect that we felt could give us an advantage in comparison to other metro” (Cllr Nawa: 2012)

Vision 2016 includes a holistic approach to environmental concerns, involving recycling, renewable energy and beautification of streets and parks by the planting of trees. The respondent mentioned that there are opportunities for developing economies to benefit from climate change mitigation strategies. The West Rand is aimed at making a strong case for private investors to assist in the growth of green and sustainable industries and renewable power generation is one of the districts’ priority sectors. Currently, the replacement of street lights with more sustainable and affordable alternatives as well as the installation of alternative energy sources in our housing developments is being implemented.

The Green IQ is a cornerstone and a commitment to make the West Rand the greenest district in South Africa and to provide an African example of how sustainable development is, not just a good choice for development, but the best choice. The Green IQ is a comprehensive strategy, built on 5 pillars, namely (WRDM IDP, 2012):

- The goal is create a place characterised by equity, dignity and possibility; where everyone has the opportunity to build a better life for themselves, their children and their children’s children.
- The economy will be re-structured to foster local resilience; to serve the people of the West Rand and be an example of participatory prosperity.
- To ensure that the natural resources are available for future generations; create a low-carbon built environment dedicated to quality of life; and regenerate rural areas with a new sense of purpose.

- Facilitate the creation of new independent power producers to generate renewable, affordable and reliable energy to power new industries and create competitive advantages.
- The West Rand aims to establish itself as a centre of excellence in green technology and green living; to attract the best minds and encourage and support the industries of the future.

The municipality has also interacted with the mining houses and businesses in the district to come aboard the programme. These include Eskom, Mondi, SANBI (South African National Biodiversity Institute), and the Industrial Development Corporation as well as the academic fraternity of the universities of Johannesburg and Wits, the university of Stellenbosch and university of Pretoria. This earmarking of key role players symbols the magnitude of commitment and advocacy to draw in resources and complementary technical capacity that which the district may not have. It holds a potential of re-engineering the district indeed into a centre of excellence in green industries and jobs. The creation of such networks is a positive step towards a creation of a competitive city and a complementary asset for the global city region.

4.7.1. The Economic Clusters

In contrast with other established metros, the West Rand is fairly behind on the aspect of densification. The sparse arrangement of human settlements, as well compacted economic clusters, are areas where the district is lacking. It still relies on what was referred to as ‘fragile’ mining and agricultural sectors which are not strategically supported at length by transportation networks. Unlike the efficient and advanced Bus Rapid Transport system already in place in the neighboring cities, the residents and business community are feeling the disconnection. However, the future plans under the Blue IQ and Regional Economic Strategy proposes the creation of economic and transport nodes that will be entrenched by the principles of the green economy.

4.7.2. The Development Zones

According to the WRDM Spatial Development Framework (2012) document, the following broad development zones are highlighted and include:

The Urban Growth Zone comprises largely of urban areas in the eastern sector of the WRDM, including Mogale City, Brinks, Vlakfontein and Leratong, Kagiso and Rietvallei, Muldersdrift, Mohlakeng and Toekomsurs near Randfontein. These are areas where major urban development is expected to occur, including residential densification and infill as well as manufacturing and industrial growth.

Peripheral interfaces between urban areas and rural land uses are intended to control urban sprawl and contain growth within urban areas, while development would be prohibited in these interfaces, land uses would be restricted to activities which are appropriate and acceptable in the rural context, including agriculture, tourist and sports facilities.

Prime opportunity zones include Magaliesburg (Mogale City Local Municipality) and Gatsrand (Randfontein Local Municipality). These areas have a diverse resource base which can be optimally utilised by the development of recreational, tourism, agricultural and conservation uses.

The mining corridor is located in the south and west of Randfontein, including the local municipalities of the Randfontein and Westonaria. Much of the land in these areas is controlled by the mining houses and is well serviced, offering opportunities for the development of small scale mining-related operations. Although the area is dominated by the mining industry, there is potential for intensive farming activities, which could diversify the economic base of the area.

Extensive agriculture covers areas located mainly north-west of Randfontein, and Mogale City Local Municipalities. The area is largely characterised by extensive agricultural units interspersed with low order nodes, usually characterized by the presence of farm schools and small scale commercial activities. Specific roads and rail routes have been earmarked as corridors to act as conduits of development and to link the development zones discussed above with each other.

A metro needs the competent skills and expertise in order to drive innovation, knowledge management and research in order to be competent to compete. The Green Economy is a new approach in South Africa which West Rand has adopted as one of its competent areas. In order to develop a knowledge base, negotiations with academic institutions, such as the

University of Stellenbosch, are in order to collaborate in establishing satellite campuses with specialisation on sustainable development. The mainstreaming of greening principles also requires that the workforce be brought at speed with these developments. An amount allocation of R 3 million has been made for the establishment of the West Rand Agricultural College that aims to promote agricultural knowledge and skills in the region.

4.7.3. The Road Networks as Gateways for the West Rand District

The West Rand District is serviced by national, provincial and local roads. The N12 and N14 are the two national roads that cross the district in a west to north eastern direction. These routes generally provide good regional access between the district and Johannesburg to the east, Pretoria to the north and the North West Province to the north-west. The majority of the roads are provincial tertiary roads with an inter-district mobility function. Movement linkages are essential as they increase a region's connectivity and access to economic and learning opportunities. The district is well-serviced in terms of east-west regional linkages. These directly link the district to the northern and central Gauteng economic powerhouses to its east, and the agricultural and mining zones of the North West Province to its west. The economic and developmental benefits that these linkages have added to the district itself so far are still relatively minimal, yet hold immense potential for timeous exchange of goods and services for regionalisation. In the globalised society, the fast movement of goods as well as the movement of people is enabled by such good road networks. However, in comparison with the neighbouring cities, the West Rand needs to invest more on the public transport facilities and improvement in the use of train experiences for the large majority of the work force.

4.7.4. Information Communication Technology

Information communication technology forms an integral part of innovation. According to the source (Respondent) the integration efforts, the district and the local municipalities (except for Mogale City and Merafong) have begun using one ICT system. The ICT Master Plan to be produced by the relevant Transformation Committee will ensure conformity is currently available but it is not clear how it will be rolled out as there are no targets in the IDP – under Goal 8 (Business Excellence in the WRDM). This is by far the alarming neglect of one of the key enablers for competitiveness. The West Rand is ranked one of the digitally excluded districts in Gauteng according to the by the Gauteng ICT Draft Strategy (2011:16).

A study by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2010) reveals a heightened importance of ICT towards the development of a city and competitiveness. ICT infrastructure such as broadband network and Wi-Fi are considered the key pull factors for business investment into the city and emerging cities have opportunity to integrate these into the overall planning. Modern ICT infrastructure is a major enabler of competitiveness than slow and inefficient interactions between authorities and businesses. The business community feels that moving the services from manual to online ensure efficiency and saves costs. The absence of a holistic ICT strategy for the district is hampering the great investment potential into the region and integrating ICT in order to achieve the sustainable smart city that blends well with the intentions of creating a green economic hub for the city region.

4.7.5. Untapped Economic Development Potential

The economy of the West Rand is said to be dominated by the tertiary sector that contributed 63% to districts' GDP in 2005. According to the West Rand District Growth and Development Strategy (2012), growth in both the tertiary and secondary sectors is relatively good at over 5% in 2005, while the primary sector continued to shrink in 2005. These trends are in line with those seen in these same sectors at a provincial level. The fastest growing sub-sectors within the tertiary sector are financial intermediation, insurance, real estate and business services growing at 8.3% followed by wholesale and retail trade. Catering and accommodation was recorded at 7.2% and then transport, storage and communication at around 6.9%. Community, social and personal services have also grown at 1.8% and are far more constant than the three sub-sectors mentioned above which show much variation year on year. As conservative sectors decline, competitive cities thrive by venturing on new markets that are presented by the information age, through environmentally friendly economic activities and up skilling the labour force. It is also important that the municipality optimises its capability of facilitating economic growth through amenable regulations and policy direction.

4.8. The Democratic Process in the Planning for the Unicity

4.8.1. Platforms for Public Participation and Consultation

Participation and consultation is one of the cornerstones of stimulating buy-in from all the sectors of the community. One of the echoed sentiments about the consultative process is that the Vision 2016 discussions are currently at a very high level. It is mainly at the political level with the technical support from the most senior management. According to the

respondents, there are various platforms at which the Vision 2016 has been publicised. The media (print and electronic), the Mayoral Izimbizos, the IDP forums, council meetings, sectoral meetings (youth, women, churches), as well as the political rallies have been used as channels to communicate the vision. Furthermore, the respondent from the Public Participation unit at the District level confirms that there are Speakers Forum and Public Participation Forums – a forum of officials from the Speaker’s Offices of all municipalities in the district where the vision is being entrenched. The Parliamentary Constituency Officers together with the Ward Councilors are the structures that would be instrumental in driving the community outreach. The district mainly plays a coordination role in the public participation since it does not have a constituency.

The Democratic / Accountable Governance Committee was mandated with developing a Communications Strategy which was drafted in 2011. The Communications Strategy will inform the path for maximising the involvement of all stakeholders to ensure the legitimacy of Vision 2016. It is, nonetheless, a view of most respondents that there has not been a vigorous drive towards involving the general public. The mayor respondent acknowledged that though the structures and channels such as the Ward councillors and ward committees have been open, “there has been a limitation in terms of the feedback exchange from the councilors” (Interview: 3rd October 2012). Furthermore, the involvement of other political parties in the political Transformation Committees and Steering Committee has insured representation. Therefore, there is constant filtering of ideas and feedback even to the interest groups.

4.8.2. Internal Management and Dialogue

The respondent who is a staff member affirms that he has not been involved in the crafting of the vision – let alone see the strategic document yet it has been mentioned in the IDP. Another opined that a Change Management Strategy is needed so that a dialogue with staff will necessitate participatory planning and make the workforce being part of the change. The sentiments of the staff interviewed are that they would like to know if they will be required to be relocated as well the opportunities, or areas, of concern in terms of their employment. It is suggested that in order to make this an inclusive process – an appointment of change management champions at all units / departments of municipalities will speed up the process of elevating inputs and cascading of decisions.

4.9. Conclusion

The information gathered in this chapter provides an understanding of the circumstances and events that have led to the inception of the Vision 2016. It is presented that the conception of Vision 2016 is a highly political agenda of the ruling party and is nuanced on the Gauteng long-term development strategy. However, the challenges of dwindling revenue collection, slow service delivery and beauracatic impediments have been identified as reasons for the amalgamation. With amalgamation, it is intended to rationalise service delivery as the current model is often ineffective in that some communities are perpetually marginalised due to low revenue collections. Therefore, as competitive cities embrace ‘compactness’ of spatial boundaries, the amalgamation of the district localities is in sync towards a common developmental vision.

The findings indicate that the harmonisation of resources and integration of line functions has begun steadily with supply chain, finance and Information Technology functions towards the shared service model. The transformation process is managed is managed by the political and administrative committees that oversee strategy development and implementation. It is evident that there is optimal use of existing personnel and there are opportunities of growth. Enthusiasm for the new tasks is evident however as pointed out, there still needs to be a structured change management for the workforce in order to maintain stability.

Amalgamation of municipal boundaries is regulated by legislative framework. As such, the initial application for a B1 category municipal status was not successful as it did not meet the legislative criteria. Nonetheless, the institutional arrangements continue while the unicity status has been deferred. The democratic processes that are embedded in the local government fraternity need to find expression through the existing structures. Proper communication channels with the citizens must be utilised and augmented to ensure all affected parties are on board. In conclusion, the success of an aspirant competitive city is dependent on the key characteristics. However, it is acknowledged that such cannot be prescriptive, nor generic, to determine the level of prosperity. City planning is a municipal competency that is largely regulated and procedural. The optimal determination of land use management and regulation of urban space must be proactively managed to evade unintended adverse consequences.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Determining the Competitiveness of Cities

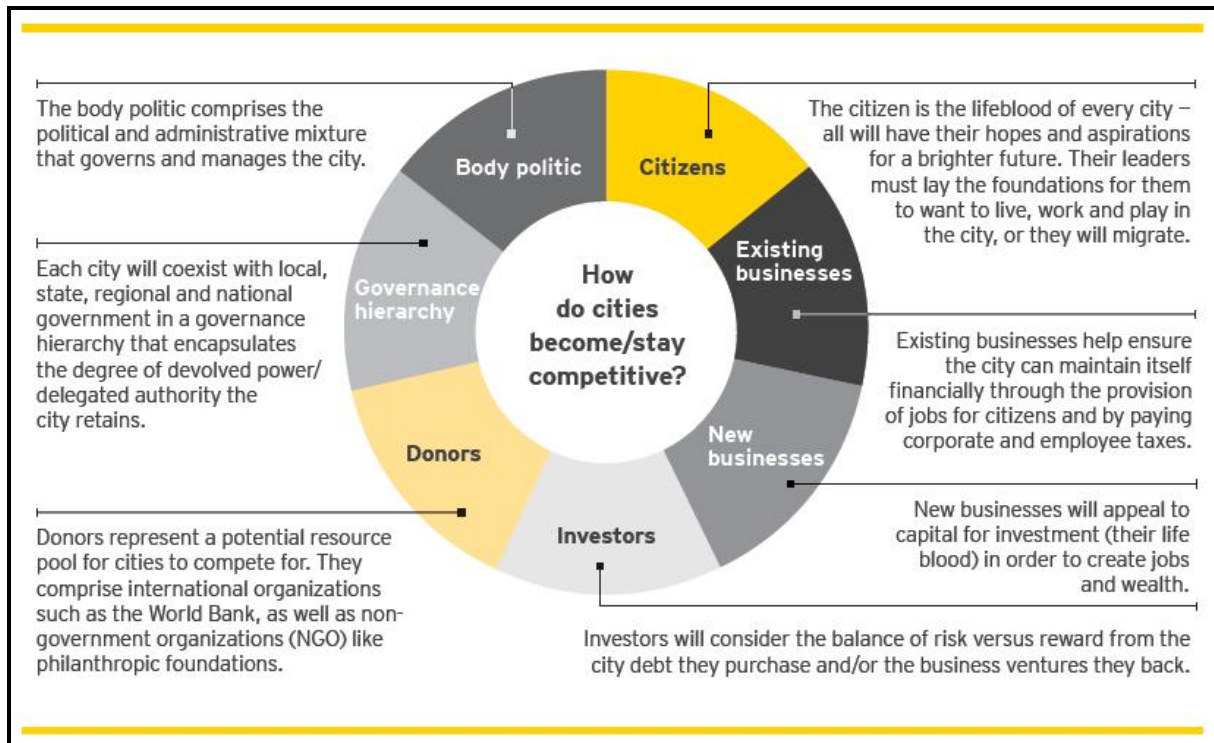
5.1. Introduction

While the research purpose assesses the implications of creating a competitive city, it is important to look into what constitutes a competitive city. Below is a discussion on the salient features that are commonly identified as key components of competitive cities. As building blocks for competitiveness, it is discussed how the population can be used as human capital that can offer skills. Economic development is facilitated through the establishment of clusters wherein competitive advantages are achieved. However, competitiveness depends on viable infrastructure development that is enabled to attract large capital investment, as well as improving the quality of life for the citizens. Governance is, therefore, pivotal in setting up institutional arrangements that enable democratic processes of engagements, while thriving on service delivery efficiency. Acknowledging the unemployment and fragile economic bases in West Rand, the district is challenged to establish an institutional model that can efficiently provide services and facilitate the establishment of economic clusters as means to advance regional competitiveness.

5.2. How Do Cities Become and Stay Competitive?

The West Rand is in pursuit of positioning itself in a system of global economy and will thus need to exercise some conformity to the norms and standards. The findings in the previous chapter indicate that the district has identified its niche in the green economy by aiming to excel in the sustainable development techniques and by optimally utilising the natural endowments. The district also defines its comparative role in the Gauteng Global City Region through the value chain factors that can be supported by resilient road networks, the information communication infrastructure as well as strategic cooperation. Below is a brief outline of generic aspects that most competitive cities have demonstrated and can be useful to assess the level of readiness for the West Rand District to become competitive.

Figure 4: An Illustration of Common Features for Competitive Cities



Source: Ernest and Young (2012): <http://www.ey.com/GL/en/Industries/Government---Public-Sector/Citizen-today--April-2011---Cities-for-citizens>

5.2.1. Human Capital Factor

In order to augment the developments which the West Rand has achieved thus far, a number of success factors to determine the competitiveness can be borrowed from Roberts and Ming (2010) who conducted a review on city competitiveness in the South American countries. The first point they argue succinctly is the availability of the human capital. By this term, the authors refer to the labour pool that can respond to the demands of the market to provide the necessary skills. To specifically refer to the Vision 2016 green economy objectives, it is understood that this phenomenon is new on the shores of developing countries. Therefore, as the district is strategically creating the networks with academic institutions, key agencies such as Eskom and agricultural institutions – it must appreciate that a large amount of reliance of external capacity cannot be equivocated at this point. The soliciting of the relevant skills and expertise lies largely with recruiting, in-depth long term capacity building for the current work force, as well as utilising the existing networks.

5.2.2. Infrastructure Development

Another salient point that Roberts and Ming (2010) make refers to the development of infrastructure. They together argue that this is largely a government competency to inject strategic infrastructural development. The West Rand has made deliberate economic nodal points centered around transport and residential precincts. The strategic location of the district is at the axis point of major road networks and rail that provides an advantage for situational conditions. In addition to this point, the supply of electric power, including the adequacy of supply compared to demand, its reliability, and the costs of supplying it are one of the contributing determining factors for competitiveness and are necessary to produce a positive climate for business operations.

5.2.3. Domestic and Foreign Investment

Investment by the private sector is deemed necessary for the city to become competitive, but it is not sufficient if treated in isolation. The authors argue that private investment can provide a one-time boost to economic growth. Foreign direct investment is more likely than domestic investment to contribute to human capital accumulation and innovation. Therefore, a commonly used practical method to attract investment, which is the provision of financial incentives, is regarded as often ineffective. The successful cities are cities that have created competitive advantage that comes from a variety of sources for leveraging. Although there is merit on this point, it is also encouraged that small and emerging enterprises are given opportunity for growth in the local economic development fraternity. This is with the view that they create buffers for unemployment; increase the local production content in the GDP as well as entrepreneurial spirit against heavy reliance of welfares of government for means of survival (LED Network, 2012). Therefore, the West Rand will need to invest its efforts in investment strategies such as the Business Retention and Expansion.

5.2.4. Industry Clustering

Clusters in economic and spatial terms are geographic concentrations of companies and industrial parks (Nollen: 2011). Nollen explains that the clustering of firms could be in the form of firms in the same industry, firms that are foreign-invested, or firms from the same city. He articulates that from clusters come several potential competitive advantages. First, several producers located geographically nearby attract suppliers at the upstream end of the value chain and distributors at the downstream end. Henceforth, both will lead to the reduction of costs for producers and potentially improve quality. Second, the producers that

are co-located in the same industry can benefit from the ease of transfer of knowledge that can only be transferred by personal contacts and first-hand experience. Thirdly, the cluster enlarges the available labour pool by attracting many workers to the area, some of whom will be available for moving from one firm to another – leading to a development of local labour.

In his analysis, Nollen (2011) illustrated that the advantages of clusters, depend on the achievement of a minimum size and density of population of firms. Nevertheless, because clusters are geographic entities and cities are geographically defined, the potential for clustering is promising as a way for cities to increase their competitiveness. The answers to these questions also depends on the right type of human capital and the types of infrastructure as well as the strategic location that is most critical to the industry are among the priority decisions to be made by the leadership of West Rand.

5.2.5. Quality of Governance

The creation of a successful competitive city heavily relies on the conducive environment that is created by the public sector and city council. The attainment of the quality of life, income and employment is a shared common goal that can largely be achieved through investment by businesses, government agencies, and non-government organisations (NGOs) that produce goods and services and create paid jobs. Nollen (2011) indicates that the significant features that bring about the conducive climate involve the existence of strong institutions such as those for judicial and mediatory services, learning and innovation hubs to produce knowledge and skills. Cultural institutions are necessary to preserve ethical behaviour, rehabilitation and restore issues of customs and identity. Financing institutions are also necessary to ensure availability of credit markets, regulation, and competitiveness for choice for accessing finance.

The South African government which operates under the realms of new public management ideology – the hollowing of the state, has invested largely in establishing the state owed enterprises and development finance institutions that act as catalytic agents for infrastructure and economic development. The Industrial Development Corporation in particular (IDC: 2012) is a national development finance institution that was set up to promote economic growth and industrial development. Similarly, the Gauteng's government Blue IQ has also been instrumental in striking partnerships that have galvanised Special Economic Zones and accelerated sector support (Blue IQ:2012). The West Rand has also geared up their capacity

to stimulate local economic development by establishing the West Rand Development Agency. The mention of these institutions is an illustration of public networks that are available for the spatial and socio-economic development of the envisaged competitive city. Together, these agencies can collaborate to maximise the development objectives in line with the Global City Region goals.

5.2.6. The Consolidation of Spatial Planning tools and By-Laws

The intentions of amalgamating the once autonomous, differently characterised levels of development and different socio-economic profiles can be very daunting. The difficulties are predominantly emanating from the legislative frameworks that guided municipal planning. The implications are on a plethora of planning tools, public management and engagement processes. Inherently municipalities within West Rand district have independently determined the parameters and form of their spatial development, autonomously determining the allocations of roads, housing and general engineering master plans. Of course with the guidance and alignment from the provincial and national growth and development strategies, the respective municipalities have previously been treated as functional areas for the province. The purpose of the West Rand District Municipality's Regional Spatial Development Framework (RSDF) is to chart a way forward for the current and future development of the region. The key strategies summarise the approach that is needed to develop the district.

However, this process needs to take place within the precepts outlining the coordination, prioritisation and strategic land use principles. Caution to be made that while the individual Spatial Development Framework currently does exist and is in use, a sensible halting and minimisation of development applications may be necessary. The strong stance to deliberately slowing will circumvent unintended development patterns that may not be suitable for the envisaged Unicity. Secondly, the transitional period may be seized by private developers as well as provincial government to meet their targets before the new form of governance is in effect.

The impact of the transformative process also poses challenges for the regulations of urban spaces. The currently existing By-Laws apply to defined authorities. In the event of the transition, it is imperative that procedural matters are adequately arranged to avoid public

mayhem as possibilities of displacements of information particulars, relocation of administrative offices and importantly the enforcement boundaries can be cumbersome.

5.2.7. Accentuating Advantages for Branding a ‘Unicity’ Towards Competitiveness

The branding of a city as a geographical locality and space of multi-faceted activities, characters, landmarks, and endowments is part of the consorts of features that embrace the contemporary competitive cities. In the simple terms, de Chernatory and McDonald (1992) succinctly put it that a successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person, or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values, which match their needs most closely. Furthermore, its success results from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition.

The objectives of city branding are widely contested. Many researchers who debate the aim of city branding don't always agree. According to Parkerson and Saunders (2004), the purposes of branding a city are to escalate the movement of tourists by cultivating attractiveness, to fuel business investments and to persuade people to settle in the city. Kavaratzis (2004) adds that city branding is understood as the means both for reaching competitive advantage in order to increase inward investments and tourism, and also for achieving community development, reinforcing local identity and identification of the citizens with their city and activating all social forces to avoid social exclusion and unrest.

Mommaas (2002) contends with assertion that that these days city brands are only fared in commercial approach and not to accomplish social and cultural objectives. According to him, they serve only the rich elite individuals and corporates that are active participants in propagating city branding. In his critique, the author argues that city brands have to improve city pride and sense of community. Whether city branding finds resonance or not, it is clearly an inevitable strategy to reinforce specialisation moving beyond industrial products but to position cities as sites to be ‘consumed’ due to a number of packaged socio-economic and leisurely activities.

Against this background, there is no substantial evidence to support that the West Rand District has employed resources and strategies to deliberately create a brand or a market outreach at least on a prominent scale. However, the district does possess exceptional tourism advantages such as the Cradle of Humankind and pristine open land and other areas of

interests scattered across the four locals. This could encourage linear tourism tracks to give visitors a package of tourism experiences. While it may be primitive to engage on marketing and advertising blitz, there is value in Anholts' (2008) differentiation between 'branding' and place branding. He charges an adamant view that place branding is earned, not constructed, or invented. By these sentiments, the author conjures up a set of following principles that make a successful place branding or competitive identity.

Underpinning these principles with a possible approach for West Rand district, one is that a competitive city must engage with the outside world in a precise, harmonised, and unrestrained manner if they are to sway public opinion. It calls for a vigorous and creative alliance amongst government, private sector and civil society, as well as the formation of new agencies and arrangements to accomplish and preserve this behaviour.

The notion of city branding is paramount as reputation is understood as an external, even cultural phenomenon that is not under the direct control of the 'owner' of the brand but which, nonetheless, is a critical factor that underpins every transaction between the brand and its consumers. Cultural phenomenon in this case would be varying from upholding the democratic institutions, embracing the human rights and environmentally sustainable policies.

City branding requires a conscious exercise of identifying actors as active agents for the consumption, promotion and facilitators of the brand that can be classified into four groups Van Den Berg and Braun (1999). The residents of the city are the potential consumers of the brand in that they settle in the city for work, study or for whatever the case. Therefore, the city branding strategy must attract viable settlements for bringing up families, as well as prospects of long term employment. Companies are also identified actors who establish their businesses in the line of firms, plantations and distribution houses and are largely driven by the availability of labour. The nature of companies largely indicate the most viable business sectors which in itself is a form of classification of the city profile for branding as elaborated in *Chapter Two*.

Paganoni (2012) asserts that tourists as actors can also be regarded as consumers of the city brand whether for short term vacations, business related visits or prominent events. The city branding strategy is pivotal in driving the city image as a destination of choice when it comes

to tourism activities. Investors are contributing actors in city branding by pouring investments towards major city projects and other initiatives that find resonance with their business interests.

The identity of place and city image reverberate stronger enticements as they are usually backed up by reputation built over time than persuasion by images and the sung praises. It is no wonder that the MasterCard Global Cities Index (2013) has rated Johannesburg the top 2013 African global destination. The index benchmarks the most visited cities across the world and interestingly attribute their success to the well-established airport systems. In contrast to Mommaass (2002) convictions that city branding profit benefits do not necessarily trickle down, the index report demonstrates that hospitality, transport industry and food services are the primary beneficiaries of the demand international visitors create. Employment in these industries also tends to be labour intensive, which makes tourist spending a strong driver of job creation in a destination city. International visitors to a destination city also seek new and rewarding experiences, especially in the arts, popular culture and entertainment, as well as historical and heritage sites unique to the city. It is these salient features that Anholt (2008) fervently argue that partly make up a city brand and that have assisted Johannesburg to be propelled to greater heights of global city competitiveness.

5.3. Key Emerging Issues and Research Findings

a) The Creation of Competitive Cities as an Enabler to Participate in the Global Economy

The research analysis indicates that the creation of competitive cities is a part of a global neo-liberal socio-economic and political order. Under the neo-liberal paradigm, the market principles have been entrenched in the manner in which governments, society and business community execute their role. Hence, the government systems have adopted the values of facilitating economic growth through market related approaches. The governments play a facilitative role through the creation of public institutions and the regulatory frameworks that render technical and financial support, arbitration and determine procedure for economic activities. The West Rand district as a government entity conforms to the neoliberal of facilitating enabling economic environment by setting the developmental agenda through the Vision 2016 Strategic Framework. The West Rand 2011/ 2016 IDP as well as the regulatory By-Laws are exemplary instruments in which the district plays a facilitative role in advancing sectors and service delivery while prescribing municipal procedure and social order.

Globalisation determines the process in which the state executes its role under the ambits of neo-liberalism. It defines the speedy manner in which goods and services are rendered. Therefore, efficiency is integral principle that underpins the manner in which goods and services are delivered by state and the market forces. The West Rand district seeks to enhance efficiency through the notion of standardisation of services through integration of functional departments. The shared services model intends to centrally manage and implement the service delivery targets with the aim of optimising financial and technical resources, cutting down the beaurocracy as well as meeting the common objective of amalgamation.

Specialisation is another element embodied under the economic process of globalisation. Specialisation as a market principle has spiraled to the ‘specialisation of space’ wherein urban planners use the spatial niches of localities in order to yield maximum outputs. Based on the findings, the West Rand has identified its niche in the broader Gauteng region to be on the agricultural, mining and tourism sectors. Therefore, the Green IQ strategy entails how the West Rand as a region can maximise such niches as specialised regional outputs in comparison with Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, Sedibeng and Tshwane regions.

By enhancing its regional strength, not only does it seek to outshine other Gauteng regions, but because of the realisation of its role in the value chain of creating a Gauteng Regional Competitiveness. Regional competitiveness of Gauteng would rely on the strength of efficient economic clusters as sites of production that collectively are able to attract investment; produce diverse economic outputs; attract skilled labour; lead in innovation and improved quality of living. It has been acknowledged that the Vision 2016 Strategy Framework is an alignment to the Gauteng provincial Vision 2055 that aims at advancing Gauteng regional competitiveness. Regional competitiveness is largely necessitated by the comparative advantages of the respective sub-regions within a city-region in that instead of competing, resources and economic outputs are harmonised in order to yield regional competitiveness.

In brief, the emerging issue in this research is that the creation of a competitive city of the West Rand is embedded in the market related value of ‘commodifying space’. In this sense, cities become competitive when they are positioned as fully-fledged geographic spaces with specialised economic outputs. Competitive cities must also embody niches in natural

resources coupled with relevant skilled labour, spearhead innovation, maintain efficient infrastructure and sound governance, as well as improve the quality of life. The objectives of the Vision 2016 echo the latter explanation, but also realises the important role in must play in the broader Gauteng 2055 Vision statement. The conclusion is that the process of amalgamation towards the Vision 2016 is influenced by a global economic paradigm, neoliberalism.

b) The Initial Stage of Vision 2016 Strategy Framework

The time of conducting the study marked one year and a few months of the current Mayoral term for His Worship, Councillor Nawa. This is an indication that work has just only begun consequent to the electioneering of the West Rand Regional Manifesto. The first logical milestone for the current leadership is to untangle the legalities of a proposed B1 category (the Unicity). Based on the argument that the application for the unicity does not satisfy the Section 12 criteria of Municipal Structures Act of 2000, it means that the envisioned institutional transformation cannot be proclaimed on the legal basis. This view can be supported by the ruling of the Municipal Demarcation Board that rejected the single authority proposal. Instead, the option of amalgamating the Randfontein and Westonaria local municipality into a one category B municipality has been approved. The meeting of the leadership at the third Vision 2016 Strategic Review on 18th – 19th June 2013 endorsed the MDB outcomes. The decision was also based on outcomes of a credible process of appraising the municipal demarcation. The research conclusion is that the single municipal entity of the West Rand can be differed the next local government term – 2016 / 2021. However, the possible challenges can be experienced in the future due to the changes in the political leadership which may not hold the similar aspirations. Secondly, an opportunity lies with the latitude of time to pilot the proposed governance model and incrementally adapt to the envisaged institutional model.

c) The planning and consultation is still at the high level

Taking into account that the decision to amalgamate the local municipalities was a political decision of the now ruling party of council, the resolution has been entrenched into council politically and administratively. It can be concluded that the engagements have been highly at a political and top management level. A framework for the transformative process was largely formulated by the technocrats with high level political oversight. This has left a pool of the work force in the dark as some have attested to a lack of cascading in the

developments. This is notwithstanding the marketing and branding campaigns through staff gear and public branding.

Labour representation has not adequately exercised their responsibilities to educate and inform the members of the implications as well as provide feedback to the management. In response to these matters, there is a need to develop a comprehensive Change Management Strategy that will detail the interventions of empowering human capital of the district including the local municipalities. Whilst acknowledging progress in as far as community outreach is concerned, there are opportunities of enhancing public participation through collaborative planning methods. The broadening of institutional capacity emphasises the use of community structures and identifying champions from diverse groups of affected communities. The Executive Mayor of West Rand also acknowledged that the effectiveness of ward-based structures can be heightened for parallel flow of engagement between the leadership and communities.

d) Steady efforts for internal governance integration

The integration of functional departments is intended to harmonise the work streams and optimally disaggregate the work force by minimising duplication. The process of creating shared services has been slow, yet steadily starting with Supply Chain Management and Internal Audit. A Shared Services Manual is yet to be produced that is intended to guide the harmonisation process. The Managers are operating on a rotational basis and dually accountable to the district and the local municipalities. What remains are integrative systems and applications that will support the stationed staff and ease of information management.

One of the prominent motivations for the Vision 2016 is that the rationalising of resources and capacity will enhance the service delivery levels. This will be achieved through prioritising the adversely affected areas with the objective of redressing the inequalities of the past. Credit is given to the attempts of collective negotiations for the purchase of bulk infrastructure and other waste management plant upgrades to service the region. On the basis of these findings, it is recommended that a status quo assessment of the existing human capacity to commission the respective tasks from the various Transformation Committees is assessed. This will allow the setting of realistic targets of implementation and the associated costs in merging some services. The impact of merging functions due to financial deficit may pose new challenges of inherited debt and cause even slower pace in service delivery.

e) Transformation Committees are yet to fulfill their mandates

The Transformation Committees are given specific mandates of designing the comprehensive strategies, implement them and oversee them throughout. According the Transformation Framework timelines, some of the frameworks are yet to be produced while others are still in draft form and wait to be adopted. One of the critical frameworks expected is the Public Participation Framework that must entail the public outreach and consultation as well Finance Model that must outline the revenue collection and sharing. These are two important elements which the former must fulfill the local democratic process that should be taking place. The latter is pivotal to address one of the fundamental reasons of a merger, that of resuscitating the struggling local municipalities that were financially unviable. However, the periodic strategic review sessions open room for continuous improvement and further engagement with the affected stakeholders.

f) Towards a Competitive Unicity

Competitive cities have been defined as urban entities that embody economic aspects of competitiveness. While acknowledging that such features are inconclusive and do not necessarily depend on each other, competitive cities are expected to demonstrate competence in efficient infrastructure, lead in innovation, have a relevant human capital, possess sound governance institutions, produce domestic products and an improved quality of life. In order to advance competitiveness, the West Rand district needs sound and efficient local economic development strategy in order to gain its confidence as a competitive city post 2016.

The assertion is that the district needs to explore and strengthen various regional and local economic development strategies in order to enhance competitiveness. The cluster development concept is already applied in the West Rand as depicted in the Spatial Development Frameworks, the Green IQ and the Regional Economic Development Strategy. These documents detail focus on establishing the urban growth zones, the peripheral interfaces, the mining corridor and extensive agricultural projects. Furthermore, the Business Development approach aims at strengthening the small and merging business entities with the objective of yielding economic growth, increase employment levels and alleviate poverty. In this instance, the municipality can adopt procurement policies that seek to protect and promote the local markets against external competition. Collaboration with key state agencies that are mandated with supporting Small, Medium and Macro Enterprises (SMMEs), Cooperatives can yield immediate buffers for the rife unemployment rates.

The level of competitiveness can be determined by the state of bulk infrastructure in the form of transportation networks, electricity, water and information technology. The inter-nodal and inter-regional gateways in the form of roads and rail are important enablers for the efficient exchange of goods and services. The West Rand district enjoys the use of major local, provincial and national road networks: the N1 and N14; this is a competitive niche towards enhancing the logistical sector. Information technology is yet to be fully developed as enabler for e-commerce and innovation. The extension of broadband and general ICT infrastructure must be elevated and expressed as an important tool that can open opportunities to save costs, reduce business red-tape and beauracracy.

Competitiveness relies on sound governance institutions and democratic structures. The West Rand district embraces the ethos of good governance by reflecting the democratically elected political leadership with the representation of various political parties. The roles and responsibilities of council are divided into executive and administrative function where accountability and transparency is ensured through oversight structures. The governance implications of creating a competitive city call for the broadening of channels for inclusivity. Collaborative planning advances governance by advocating for the incorporation of multi-disciplinary stakeholders in the planning arena. The municipality takes a role of facilitating relations with other agencies of state in order to achieve the common developmental agenda. The strategic spatial planning approach can assist in strengthening governance by ensuring integration of the socio-economic and environmental aspects in the blue-print spatial plans.

In relation to the quality of life as a feature of competitiveness, the West Rand underpins the targets of the Millennium Development Goals in the service delivery plans entailed in the IDPs. However, there are areas of concern in relation to the disparities towards the rendering of services. In line with the determinants of competitive advantages, the soft conditions theory suggests that the existence of favourable living conditions work as an attraction to retain diverse skilled labour due to the availability of amenities. With the levels of access to basic services and housing conditions, more work would be necessary to create a place of choice to live and work for the necessary skilled labour. The graphical illustrations also depict a concerning picture in relation to the distribution of income and service delivery. The disparities of income levels, within the local municipalities, presuppose a formidable case for the amalgamation so that service delivery is rationalised. Rationalisation therefore is one of

the methods that are applied in improving the quality of life and contributes towards the competitiveness of the West Rand.

5.4. Conclusion

City competitiveness has been largely justified as a strategic approach to city development with the aim of heightening the economic outcomes, as well as to improve the quality of life for its citizens. As a contemporary popular model, this section looks at the yardsticks in which the levels of maturity for competitiveness can be measured. The availability of skills in the labour market is one of the prerequisites for competitiveness that can respond to the innovative initiatives. As the West Rand gears for a green city, this requires the necessary skills without relying much on importing them. Service excellence requires public administrators that can deal with the social and technical realities.

Infrastructure development and bulk infrastructure are the cornerstones of enabling economic development as well as improving the quality of life. It opens up channels for private and public investments. However, this largely relies on the ability of the municipalities to generate revenue to be able to fund such initiatives. Therefore, strategic partnerships are pivotal while capitalising on the already existing capital. Competitiveness is galvanised by economic clusters where competitive advantages are achieved. Through clustering, a region or the city is able to elevate the niches and further form links with neighbouring regions. The West Rand comprehends this notion by outlining various nodes at the strategic key points such as the transit oriented developments, corridors and specialised zones. Clusters are not only beneficial for bringing employment, but also valuable in promoting the economies of scale.

The vibrancy and excellence in the competitive cities relies on the quality of its governance. Not only do institutional structures need to reflect decentralisation, but must also encourage democratic processes of decision making as well as efficient delivery services. Competitive cities recognise the importance of designing frameworks that can manifest the vision of social cohesion and addressing marginalisation in the city. For West Rand, the various strategies for human settlements, transport networks and amenities must be harmoniously aligned. Beginning with the consolidation of Town Planning Schemes, it can reduce the differentiated treatment as well as improve management of land uses. Competitive cities are enhanced through strong strategies of branding. Cities employ mechanisms that will accentuate their competitiveness by promoting their excellent abilities, be it services to cultural and

recreational aspects. The West Rand has identified this component of competitiveness through their tourism strategy. There is opportunity to further improve the inherent assets for commercial gains.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Incorporating Planning Theories and Conclusion on the Implications of Creating a Competitive city

6.1. Introduction

The key emerging issues that are captured in the previous chapter indicate that competitive cities are viewed as economic drivers from a regional to a global scale. The analysis of the West Rand District municipality case study against the theoretical framework suggests that the district is at a steady stage of gearing up for a competitive metro status. The success of Vision 2016 is dependent on the efficiency of the transformation committees as well as on a concerted effort to integrate internal governance arrangements. It is from this premise that the objective of this chapter is to present a collection of planning theories that can be applied in relation to the high level findings that have been discussed. The three theories, namely the communicative/collaborative; equity planning and strategic spatial planning theories have been carefully selected to recommend the approaches of dealing with facilitating vision-building, equitable distribution of resources and the strategic use of spatial planning to be in line with the objectives of vision 2016.

The creation of a competitive city is a multi-faceted process that needs to give balance between growth and socio-economic imperatives, while involving all the relevant role-players. It is about decision-making that embraces various role players who hold various interests notwithstanding principles of equity in the distribution of resources in a sustainable manner.

In the previous chapters, it is discussed that the motivating factors for transformation the West Rand into a competitive city are fundamentally based on the political determinations in the province but also largely as pursuit of economic and social sustainability. Based on the literature review that defines the core elements of a competitive city, the district bears characteristics of a spatially spread regional economic hubs; varying levels of labour skills and employment. Taking into account the research findings, the issues that emerge are that the creation of a competitive city in West Rand is in line with the global neo-liberal socio-economic and political order. Thus, the district must play a facilitating and enabling role for the markets while insuring that the basic public services are rendered.

The incorporation of the market principles in municipal management connotes that in order to achieve resilience and economic growth, the district needs to embody the characteristics of city competitiveness. While the features of competitiveness may not be standard and not conclusive, governance, infrastructure, human capital, indigenous natural resources, investment attraction and innovation are cited as prominent aspects. In comparison with the progress in the West Rand district, it is clear that the district is at the stages of consolidating compactness in the form of amalgamation and setting the common developmental vision. During the process of amalgamation, a few issues emerge. It is observed that the transformation process is still at a primitive stage and is yet to comply with the legislative frameworks that govern the amalgamation processes. With this observation presupposes the need for extensive public participation for a legitimised transformation process, Progress is noted from some transformative committees in developing and implementing portfolio based strategies yet others are yet to fulfill their mandates.

The consideration of Healey's communicative, or collaborative planning theory, gives a perspective that reinforces interaction and deliberation among all groups that are involved in planning process (Healey: 2003). This section argues for the usefulness of a collaborative approach by underpinning mediation among various stakeholders in the planning process. The element of inclusivity is critical to promote unity for a common development purpose amongst diverse representative groups and to minimize the imposition of development ideas by those in power. Whilst communicative planning is widely criticised as too abstract, time consuming and underestimates the use of power (Sager: 2006 and Huxley: 2000), I argue for the consideration of equity planning as a supplement to the former. Equity planning is an approach that gives priority to the marginalized and vulnerable members of society by emphasising redistributive justice. In the case of West Rand district, equity planning suggests a redress of the historical disparities towards rendering services and uneven spatial distribution of economic activities. Equity planning entails elements of equality, needs assessment, preference and willingness to pay as apparatus to gauge the extent of equitable justice.

Acknowledging the challenge of striking a balance amongst the competing priorities for development and equity, strategic spatial planning is a reconciliatory approach which considers setting a long term vision, identifies stakeholders and necessary resources with identified outcomes for a specific spatial location in a democratic manner (Albrechts: 2006).

Strategic spatial planning is discussed in this section to elaborate a multi-disciplinary approach that defines the most amenable process to achieve the set vision, objectives and outcomes of Vision 2016. In this manner, the leadership and planners in the West Rand district are equipped with development planning strategy approach towards policy making, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes as well as impact.

6.2. Collaborative / Communicative Planning Theory

Collaborative planning is a contemporary approach to development planning that acknowledges the diversity of communities. It is a move away from conservative and scientific justification of how development should occur towards an activism approach that recognises the value of mobilising social capital for growth and transformation (Healey: 2006). Innes and Booher (1999a) state that it is an attempt to move away from blueprint plans that were directly translated to implementation plans. Collaborative planning therefore is a move towards policy planning that espoused a negotiated process that involved an exchange and bargaining among the range of actors as a response to distributive injustices.

The collaborative planning entails a set of characteristics that can be adopted as useful tools in the creation of a competitive city in the West Rand District. The process of conducting collaborative planning is premised primarily on what Healey (2003) refers to as the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ infrastructure. The soft infrastructure refers to the platforms which allow interaction and dialogue to continuously build a social consensus be it meetings. The primary purpose of soft structures is to encourage an inclusive strategy making process based on dialogue. They are premised on principles of trust while mediating the power relations. To assist the collaborative planning process where complex groups will arrive to consensus, Healey (1997; 2003) suggests that an ‘institutional frame of reference’ could be applied during planning. The frame of reference refers to the creation of conducive and innovative conditions that will allow for deliberation processes which will embrace the quality of legitimacy; comprehensibility; sincerity and truth.

In order to give effectiveness, order and legitimacy of the deliberative processes mentioned above, the ‘hard’ infrastructure relates to the political, administrative and legal institutional mechanisms (2006). The primary objective of these hard structural bodies is to provide the operational framework and parameters of the continuous dialogue. Therefore, they provide procedure for mediation in instances of conflict and platforms for information exchange and

good governance procedures such as accountability and transparency. The ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructures therefore form foundation and the context in which an effective collaborative planning process must take place. They are critical factors that will determine the quality, the scope and progress of the planning process outcomes. From this point the key pillars of collaborative planning are discussed and an argument for their usefulness as planning solutions to the creation of a competitive city in the West Rand district. The various authors, though writing from various perspectives, all point out the salient features of collaborative planning to be about inclusivity, institutionalism, leadership and facilitation and will be discussed below.

6.2.1. Collaborative Planning for the Promotion of Inclusivity

Throughout most government led initiatives, there is a general consensus that development planning can no longer be a top-down exercise based on hierarchical institutions and arbitrary decision making. The rise of neo-liberal paradigm presupposed that governments must adopt democratic systems of leadership thereby practicing the ethos of good governance. Good governance (Weiss: 2000) sets the guiding principles for the way in which states and communities should conduct themselves by prescribing rights and responsibilities for interaction.

Collaborative planning has been widely embraced in the urban planning field as it promotes an inclusive process wherein a myriad of stakeholders would participate thereby effecting democratic decision making and renders legitimacy of the process. Forester (1999) attests that urban development strategies are enriched through the participation of the stakeholders that will directly or indirectly affected by development. This process allows for the critical examination of plans and opens for constant feedback. Nonetheless, as noted by Huxley (2000); Brand and Griffikin (2007), unfavourable conditions, such as the abuse of power, can compromise the process of planning. The imbalance in the power relations can lead to superficial consultations well as exclusion of the weaker constituencies.

To counteract these instances, there needs to be empowerment strategies that must seek to broaden participation to reach the most disadvantaged groups. In West Rand, the disadvantaged groups range from the people with little access to council information due to illiteracy, limited access to electronic and published media. Other forms of exclusion may occur due to social norms like religious and cultural rules for women and the youth that

prohibit their participation in public platforms. Ansell and Gash (2008) recommend that the involvement of disempowered groups must be facilitated by skilled professionals and voluntary groups and public forums must be established. Not only is it vital for entrenching participation, it also advances empowerment through knowledge dissemination and skills to comprehend and further engage. Secondly, the recognition of inter-dependent relations between the state agencies and the communities is necessary for sustained relations that are based on trust. Therefore, Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) propose that for sustained relations and to gain buy-in, the state must provide resources be it financial, administrative or legal support for continued collaborative decision making.

With the inclusive planning element of collaborative planning in mind, it is clear that there is involvement of multi-disciplinary stakeholders in the planning process for the West Rand Vision 2016. The assessment of the case study reveals that representation in the development of plans is largely through the political parties. While assumption can be made that the community members are given feedback through the political and public participation canals such as Ward Committees and Mayoral Outreach Programmes, it is not evident that these channels are well-capacitated to mobilise the members who are apolitical or means to access meetings and information. There is a gap for activism and advocacy by voluntary and non-state affiliated organisations that will vigorously mobilise disempowered community members by disseminating information and rendering necessary skills for their emancipation as Ansell and Gash (2008) suggested. The involvement of activist group would assist to synthesise the issues of social, cultural and literacy barriers that may be possible hindrances for engagement.

In recognition of interdependent relation wherein the West Rand district leadership requires buy-in from the affected communities by therefore attaining legitimacy, it would be in their (leadership) interest to invest more on providing all the necessary resources to strengthen participation. This could be done through collaborating with Non-Governmental Organisations and engaging active and vocal community members that can mobilise community forums and interest groups. The provision of logistical facilities, dedicated personnel as contact persons with the municipality and legal assistance will be useful to mitigate conflict and adversarial use of power.

The findings on the case study indicate that the West Rand district Vision 2016 is largely a high level strategic framework in the hands of top political and administrative leadership. This suggests that the communities have minimal involvement in the inception of the Vision 2016 Strategic Framework. There is an element of disempowerment through the selective release or withholding of critical information to the broader community. It further demonstrates that the leadership is to some extent disengaged with the constituencies and boards on marginalisation of those who do not have access to it.

Still on the matter of dependencies, the intergovernmental relations with other spheres of government seen to be flawed from conception. For example, the fact that the district adopted a process of amalgamating the local municipalities in 2011, but has failed to meet the regulatory suggests that intergovernmental interdependencies were not adequately considered. As a result, a level of unrealistic expectations has been raised with specific timeframes of 2016. An assumption can be made that the motivations for the transformative process were beyond just addressing developmental challenges but also largely political for the purposes of gaining control. The responses suggested would then require a strong institutional capacity internally for further facilitation.

6.2.2. Strengthened Institutional Capacity to Facilitate Collaborative Planning

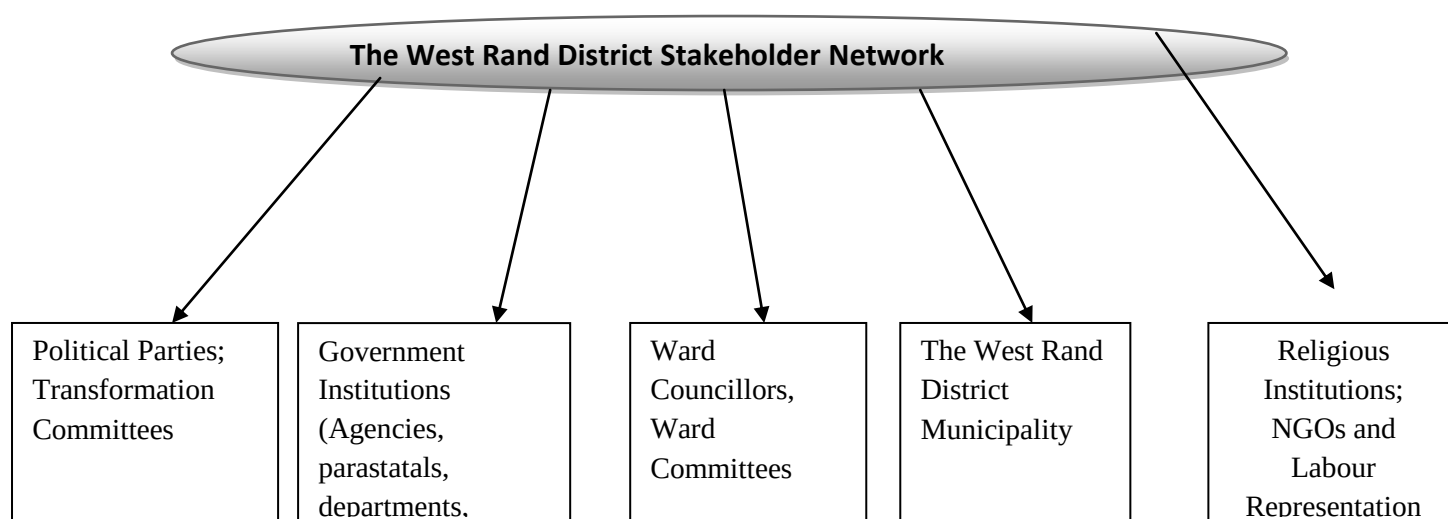
The building and maintaining of social institutions is a critical component of collaborative planning to promote dialogue for shared vision through the sustained permeating threat of trust. As Healey (1997:58) puts it that “[Institutionalism] emphasises the way through the flow of the social relations of our lives, we ‘make’ our identities and our relations with others. In these social relations, we make both our identities and our relational bonds with others. These bonds ‘hold’ through shared understandings and mutual trust which create relational resources to be called upon future times...”

The significance of strong institutional capacity in development planning has seen the conclusion of development plans and other agreements of cooperation for urban developments. According to Innes and Booher (1999) the high outcomes of collaborative planning is attained through the establishment of high levels of institutional capacity that is based on the relations of trust that is gained over time through short term tangible results. Institutional capacity refers to a set of collaborative networks with the objective of creating common visions and reinforcing knowledgeable and well-coordinated and legitimised

structures for deliberations. Innes and Booher (2004) further elaborate that the cementing trust is generated over time; it requires constant exchange of information and community involvement with sufficient support of technical, financial, legal and administrative assistance by the state.

Promoting broader public participation is instrumental in strengthening trust between the state agents and the collaborative networks. Barnes and Newman (2007) contribute that through participation, the element of trust is built by setting the standard norms of engagements for stability. It is built through proven records of achieving the set goals with visible outcomes as well as continued relations of continuous feedback. Nonetheless, the process of building institutional capacity needs to be managed with critical eye to circumvent the imposition of self-serving interests through manipulation of power that may compromise the outcomes. Municipality can also compromise the institutional capacity through unreasonable timeframes for engagements by not allowing adequate times for consideration of proposals and limiting the proper channels for inputs. As similar to the mechanisms to promote inclusion, the municipality has the obligation to provide all the necessary facilities and logistics to support this process.

Figure 5: The West Rand District Institutional Capacity for the Facilitation of Collaborative Planning



Emulating the institutional capacity element as articulated above for the West Rand district case study, it has been demonstrated that there is diversity in the political representation wherein there are six recognised political parties in the district council. The process of

council debates and leading to resolutions is a suggestive way in which the codified norms and standards for engagements are understood thus yield stability and maintaining order. It is a platform for bringing governance principles into action as political parties hold each other to account and given leeway to challenge processes legally in instances of contraventions of legal frameworks.

Notwithstanding the public participation channels such as the Ward Committees, Ward Councilors and Mayoral Izimbizos, one of the interview responses indicated that there is less vigor in getting feedback through these structures back to council. While looking at the external networks for dialogue, the internal workforce also constitutes a section of institutional capacity in that they are also part of shaping the long term vision. Therefore, labour representation through Local Labour Forums and Unions are an integral part in negotiating for the workers interests as well as reliable conduits for information exchange.

In order to arrive at a long term common vision, it would be suggested that an institutional capacity be implemented as according to the collaborative planning process. The consultation processes is primarily strong at a high political and technical level. The Transformation Committees that have been established could be enhanced by involving other social players and the use of e-governance tools. However, the costs of supporting the social partners with technical and logistical arrangements as recommended by Barnes and Newman (2007) may be too much for the district however necessary. It is important that the leadership should strike a balance between mitigating costs versus establishing social capital as a long-term asset to future planning. The cross-border issues through re-demarcation are a pertinent issue for the district learning from the Khutsong community case in 2010. Matebesi (2011) highlights that unilateral decision about cross-border issues without effective communication at a local level may entice civil unrest to demonstrate resistance. The amalgamation process of West Rand district is largely driven by a provincial Gauteng City Region 2055 strategy. While government is given authority to initiate programmes, buy-in at very primitive stages is important to allow proper engagement for all affected communities.

6.2.3. Facilitating Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative planning requires mediation and sensitivity to the views of the collective. It calls for the championing of ideas and implementation of the set plans with the aim of advancing the interests of the collective. Innes and Booher (1999) define collaborative

leadership as the ability to institute, protect and inspire the collaborative planning process by setting the long term vision and coordinate building of consensus. These authors both add that leadership is pivotal for establishing the rules of engagement, enthusing trust and facilitating discussions as well as empowering the skills for engagement. The primary essence of collaborative planning is, therefore, to encourage cooperation amongst various stakeholders.

In order to achieve cooperation among stakeholders, Innes and Booher (2003) suggest that a successful process would largely rely on 'authentic dialogue' that must be facilitated by leaders. Apart from rhetorical and ceremonial semantics, authentic dialogue requires that the stakeholders must set their own terms of references, must design tasks for which capacity to execute must be made available and all records of progress must be made available. Reciprocity is a result wherein participants are committed to their roles and new relationships are established for mutual benefits.

Collaborative leadership is, however, not immune to eminent challenges of resistance towards the collaborative efforts. Lack of flexibility and adjustments to the unique conditions by insisting on predetermined procedures can lead to compromised outcomes. Power imbalances and socio-economic and cultural dynamics, as well as grown interests, can further pose as obstacles in collaborative leadership. In dealing with power imbalances, Forester (1989) opines that leadership cannot remain solely neutral by treating the disempowered and the elitist groups the same. He proposes that a pre-mediation strategy should give discretion to the planners to ascertain the needs of the weaker sections of the community so that they are prioritised. Otherwise, Forester maintains that by treating all concerned as equals, the existing inequalities may be reinforced without changing the status quo.

To concur with Innes and Booher (1999), the leadership of West Rand has facilitated collaborative leadership by recognition of a political dialogue. While there are dissenting views from the opposition parties, the resolution of councils to adopt the West Rand Vision 2016, and their further participation in the Transformation Committees, suggest that there is a level of cooperation. Collaborative leadership requires forging relations with a network of organisations. As such, the Executive Mayor confirms that in order to achieve the goal of becoming a green city, relations are being forged with public, private and academic institutions that can leverage on resources. The collaborative leadership goes beyond

recognising interdependencies, but also setting the long term vision for development. The articulation of the West Rand Vision 2016 is a vision set by the district leadership and is nuanced on the provincial strategy of the Gauteng City Region. However, there is a need to enhance the collaborative governance structures that can entrench the long term vision throughout the affected communities. For example, the interviewed community members confirmed that they were not knowledgeable about the details and implications of the Vision 2016. This is an indication that the long term vision is somehow detached to the constituencies thus an assumption is that there is minimal exchange of ideas. This gap strengthens the argument that the leadership in West Rand needs to invest towards the social capital that will galvanise dialogue at a grass root level.

6.2.4. The Role of a Municipality in Facilitating Collaboration

The common thread throughout the elements discussed above is the emphasis on facilitation in the collaborative planning process. As a consensus seeking approach, a role of planners is placed as essential in yielding quality outcomes as demonstrated previously. A lot of references pertain to the ethical, technical and normative professional conduct of planners as solutions to complexities of power, inequalities and information analysis. According to Rhodes (1996), attaining legitimacy and accountability in a collaborative process may be a challenge due to the complexity of institutional networks. It is, therefore, the role of a development planner to advance collaboration through an agreed set of rules and garnering consent from various relations of power.

Castells (2001) suggests that government also plays a facilitation role in the planning process by establishing flexible institutions that will enable adaptation to new circumstances. Government plays a critical role of facilitating a collaborative process through decentralising power and encouraging public involvement towards determining growth and development. Castells further elaborates that government convenes the facilitator role through coordination of various institutional networks and plans, steering and maintaining the intended objectives and encouraging integration for diversity.

The experience of West Rand district leadership and administration as agents of facilitation can be related to the West Rand. The interview findings indicate that the current institutional setting is still semi-federal wherein local authorities are still exercising their executive authority. However, the amalgamation process renders an assumption that the district is in

pursuit of a central management structure due to the establishment of shared services. In order to pursue a democratic and power shared institutional model as mentioned by Castells (2001), the Governance Model (discussed in *Chapter 3*) would be a suitable institutional arrangement. The governance model embraces the principles of collaborative approaches by acknowledging the importance of civil society involvement in decision making while adopting some market principles in rendering services.

Collaborative leadership is not only required for internal institutional arrangement, but further to the style of leadership by the representatives of community structures. The necessary skills for collaborative leadership must be advanced in order to collate opinions, perceptions and carry out advocacy. The West Rand has demonstrated facilitation through the development plans such as the IDPs and the Vision 2016 Strategic Framework. The emphasis could be made that a bottom-up approach is favourable, where government leads in initiating high level plans.

Whereas the collaborative planning approach upholds the values of inclusive participation, the approach leads to legitimate and democratic outcomes for policy-making process. As demonstrated above, collaborative planning relies on facilitation by the ethical good-seeking development planning practitioners as well as collaborative leadership. The uprooting of diverse inputs from affected stakeholders is enhanced through strong advocacy community agencies while the public sector must provide amenable institutional mechanisms for agreed process and good governance. Nonetheless, Huxley (2000) highlights the shortcomings of a collaborative approach. Her views are that collaborative planning presents a superficial sense of consensus-building due to the complexity of interests. Collaborative planning ignores the adverse implications of abuse of power in the negotiating process, and that it is too abstract in that it relies on normative concepts instead of logical and empirical process. In acknowledging these shortfalls, it can be concluded that the collaborative planning approach needs to be enhanced by equity planning that will ensure the social distributive justice in the face of arbitrary and manipulative use of power.

6.3. Equity Planning

The above shortfalls of a collaborative approach can be supplemented by embedding the equity planning methods in collaborative planning to address perpetual inequalities and marginalisation in the planning process. Krumlotz and Forester (1990), define equity

planning as a deliberate focus towards the needs of the poor and vulnerable groups in society. Lucy (2007) also adds to the complexity of defining equity (*planning*) by stating that it is concerned with equal treatment while simultaneously treating the unequals unequally, which must both be tested on the equilibrium of fairness.

Equity planning is therefore concerned with distributive justice that is concerned with allocation of resources and opportunity. Lucy (2007) considers the critical elements of equality, need, demand, preference and willingness to pay as gauging litmus tests to qualify equity planning. Lucy ponders that all of these aspects may not apply all at once, but may be useful and may need to be given context and operational meaning. Equity planning finds relevance to the West Rand Vision 2016 by acknowledging the current distributive injustices on service delivery and economic opportunities. The amalgamation process for centralised revenue collection and standardisation of municipal functions augurs with the principles of equity planning wherein the primary focus is on the redress of the Apartheid social and economic injustices. In the district, the equity programmes must be geared towards assisting the unemployed and the communities that are not adequately receiving services. Equity schemes may be channeled towards subsidising the small entrepreneurs and towards funding for labour intensive programmes to curb unemployment and provide buffer for extreme poverty. The indigent policies have been instrumental to ensure that the people within low income brackets also have access to the basic services.

6.3.1. Integrating Equality

Equality as a concept under equity planning is a basic premise that ensures equal basic human rights. The South African Constitution (1996) enshrines the Bill of Rights to all citizens while also bestowing the responsibility of advancing equality and promoting socio-economic development to local government through prioritising the basic needs of communities. Equality translates to the basic right of equal access to municipal services in the planning context. However, equity is limited when tested against the ‘needs assessment’ which may be unequal therefore leading to unequal distribution. Spatial realities may also pose as a barrier to equal distribution due to physical dislocations. The realities of uneven access to services such as sanitation, housing and waste collection in Merafong and Westonaria local municipalities are evident in the West Rand district, while Mogale City local municipality consistently fares well in services and revenue collection. It can be deduced that Vision 2016 is a strategy geared towards promoting equal access to basic services and is geared towards a

redistributive justice. Feinstein and Feinstein (1996) argue that planners must work towards increasing equality in the mist of conflicting interests in society.

6.3.2. The Needs Assessment for Equity Planning

Based on the needs assessment, the guiding principles is that equity planning means that unequals must be treated unequally. Lucy (2007) elaborates on this aspect by prescribing that those who need more services must be entitled to more without placing the affordability criterion. The needs assessment can be conducted through identifying low income, poverty lines and the minority groups. The implications for the West Rand are that while in pursuit of a competitive city model, it would be useful to establish programmes that are geared to address adverse poverty stricken regions such as Merafong and Westonaria by facilitating new employment markets and unemployment buffer schemes. In line with the requirements of a competitive city, the need for sufficient human capital must be strengthened on these parts of the region. This equity approach can minimise the need to import skills, but rather focus on diversifying the economic activities.

6.3.3. Managing Demands and Preferences

Equity planning can also be reinforced by measure of demand for a particular service. Lucy (2007) explains that demand in equity planning emanates from active demonstration of interest for a particular service. The demand can be demonstrated both by the active recurrent use of a particular service such as water, roads and transport. The use of petitions, requests and complaints is another form to measure demand. Equity planning in this instance may be demanded by sentiments to either improve the quantity, timing and the type of rendering the service. Equity planning thus enhances collaborative planning as it also embraces deliberation and involvement of minority groups in order to ascertain the demanded services (Krumholtz:1996).

The methodology of crafting the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) involves an initial stage of consultation with the affected communities. During this phase, planners are able to gather pointers of what kind of service and developments affected communities would like to have. The evidence of demand services are reflected in the ward-based plans as well as on the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) of West Rand district. However, it can be argued that preference could be exercised by planners as a deliberate and strategic direction in so far as locating the development hubs as catalysts towards a long term

development vision. For example, the Green IQ Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy are deliberate and bold policy statements by the district leadership of integrating sustainable principles throughout the functions and economic sectors. This aspect requires a top-down approach with the exercise of determining the trade-offs between what the community may demand, versus the long term strategic spin-offs of establishing economic clusters and development zones. In this instance, a case for beneficiation and opportunity costs will need to be well articulated as to how they can contribute towards equitable sharing in the long term.

6.3.4. Embracing Market Principles for Efficient Equitable Distribution

The aspect of willingness to pay for access to services based on the affordability is an ambiguous element that is argued to be more of an efficacy component rather than for equity planning. According to Lucy (2007) the aspect of willingness to pay is based on the principle that the user must pay for the services rendered even by the public institution. The argument in favour of this aspect is that privatisation of public services can yield efficiency in order to speed up equitable distribution of services. Boycko and others (1996) argue that privatisation of public services is a response to municipal capacity that may be strained to respond with the demands for services in terms of financial and human resource capabilities.

In contrast to this argument is a vehement articulation by Bond (2003) that the introduction of market principles in the rendering of services is another means of perpetuating inequalities by moving from ‘racial apartheid to class apartheid’. His views are that privatisation of public services reinforces continued exclusion of the historically poor and marginalised community to the basic rights of access to services. While the West Rand has not articulated a model for privatising public services through corporatisation in the Vision 2016, residents have an obligation to pay for property rates, sewerage, water and lights. However, the local municipalities within the district have put in place indigent policies and tax rebates for the poorest of the poor. Equity is attained through the redistributive justice wherein there is cross subsidization between the areas where there is high revenue generation to the less financially empowered communities.

Nonetheless, the privatisation cannot be entirely dismissed as an option to advance access to services. The West Rand currently seeks a turnaround strategy that will open new streams of revenue and to manage the current municipal debts. As a player in the political economy that

enthuses the neo-liberal state interventions, consideration could be applied with the emphasis on economic and financial returns that can be channeled to back for redistributive justice. Not only is it necessary for public welfare, but it is also necessary as financial sustainability can yield positive outcomes for competitiveness due to improved allocation for infrastructural development, attraction of investment and improve governance.

6.4. Strategic Spatial Planning

Whilst appreciating the benefits of collaborative planning for upholding the principles of inclusivity and equity planning methods to achieve equitable distribution of resources, planners are presented with a challenge of averting fragmented interventions to space and place management without compromising other interests of society. Healey (1997) narrates that strategic spatial planning goes further to define various socio-economic, environmental and institutional imperatives. She clarifies that strategic planning has been largely borrowed from the commercial sector wherein an optimal use of resources is balanced out in line with various alternative scenarios. The inclusion of ‘spatial’ in strategic planning definitively indicates the geographical locality in which the ultimate implementation of plans towards achieving envisioned outcomes will take place.

6.4.1. Tools and Concepts in Strategic Spatial Planning

Strategic spatial planning according to Reid (2007) is concerned with the development of space and place, thus is followed by a sequence of in-exhaustive planning concepts and tools (*see Table 6 below*). As such, the West Rand district is mandated by law (Municipal Systems Act of 2000) to incorporate the Spatial Development Framework chapter (SDF) in the IDP as a spatial planning tool to outline the various land uses and forward planning within the municipal boundary. Being informed by the objectives of Vision 2016, the district has developed the Regional Growth and Development Strategy aimed to design a blueprint for the region that must incorporate spatial integration of the merging local authorities, reconfigure the physical bulk infrastructure, regional economic development, social and environmental management as well as governance.

In applying these principles in practice, it is clear that there is a need to intensify efforts for developing corridors. The West Rand district is currently pursuing amalgamation of municipal boundaries of sparsely separated municipalities. Compactness can therefore be facilitated through deliberate linkages among the urban ‘nodes’ such as Krugersdorp,

Randfontein and Carletonville. With the vast availability of land in-between the nodes, there lies opportunities of introducing economic activities that can eventually lead to a true conurbation of the West Rand. Spatial planning tools are also important to address the spatially engrained inequalities. Therefore, an overhaul of the current settlement patterns, sources of work and social activities is needed in order to promote social cohesion and efficiency in terms of mobility and cost effectiveness.

Table 6: Table listing the common planning concepts used for Strategic Spatial Planning

Concept	Description
Corridors	These are links between nodes, along which an increased intensity of development may be encouraged. Corridors provide efficient access to a higher level of economic opportunities than would generally be the case in a less structured space. They typically include public transport routes.
Nodes	Areas where a higher intensity of land uses and activities are supported and promoted. Typically, any given municipal area would accommodate a hierarchy of nodes that indicates the relative intensity of development anticipated for the various nodes, their varying sizes and their dominant nature.
Densification	The increased use of space both horizontally and vertically within existing areas/ properties and new developments accompanied by an increased number of units and population threshold.
Urban Edge	A demarcated line and interrelated policy that serves to manage, direct and limit urban expansion.
Efficiency	Development that maximises development goals such as sustainability, integration, accessibility, affordability and quality of living, relative to financial, environmental and social costs.

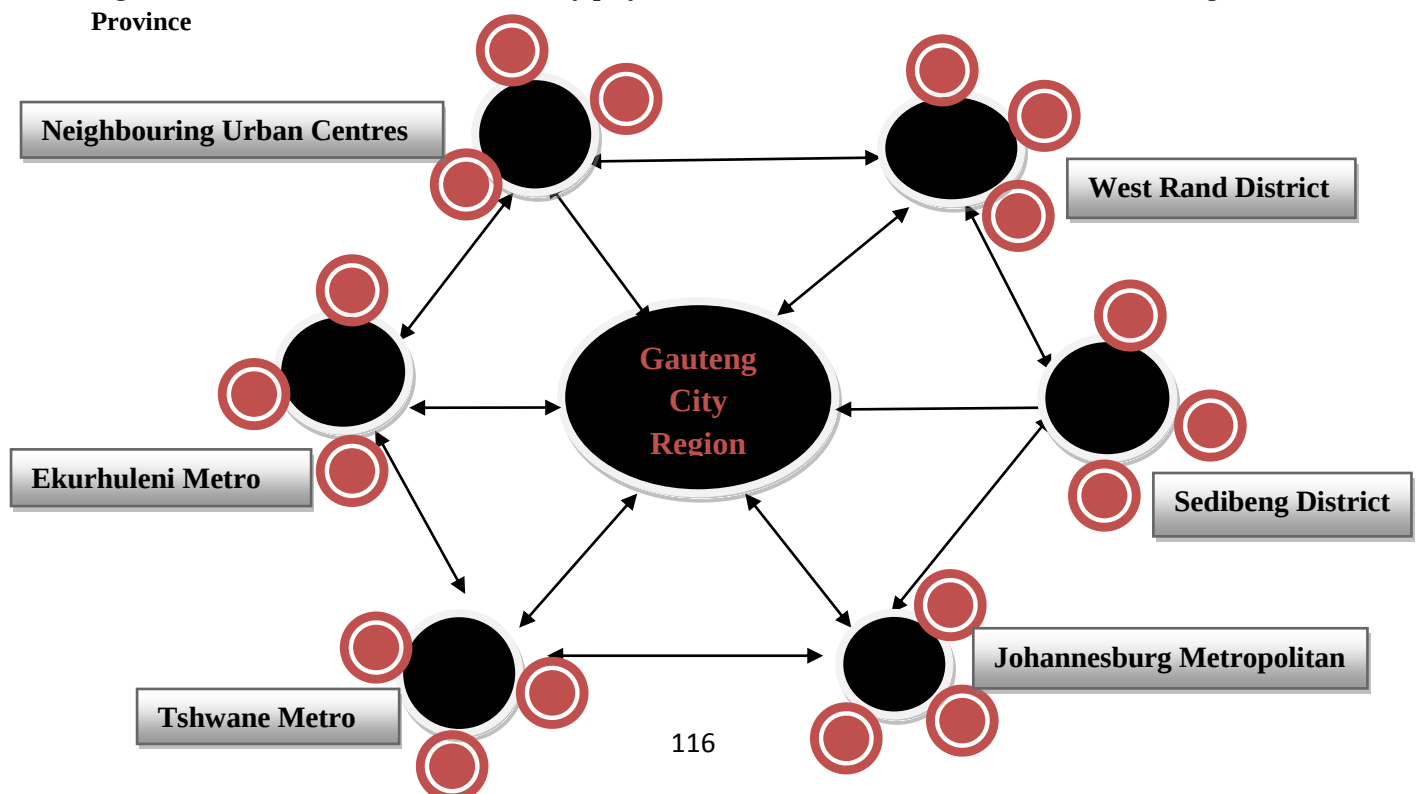
Source: Guidelines for the Development of Municipal Spatial Development Framework (2012)

Discussed above are the main concepts relative to the municipal planning sphere in the strategic spatial planning process. However, elevating the significance of the district at the provincial level indicates that the different hierarchies in the government sphere tend to apply different concepts during the strategic spatial planning process. At a provincial level, the global city region is a prominent spatial planning concept that is concerned with the inter-

relationship of the competitive cities within the Gauteng province towards achieving a globally competitive Gauteng region (Meijers et al: 2005). The West Rand district also aims to align itself with the provincial development objectives as a critical building block for the Vision 2055 that envisions the establishment of a Gauteng City Region. This is reflected in the Vision 2016 Strategic Framework document where it is stated that the amalgamation process is a build up towards supporting the provincial long term objectives.

Global city regions are necessitated by the concept of polycentricity. Hague and Kirk (2003) explain that polycintricity is about the interconnected network of urban spaces that together form a mega-tropolis that operates as a unit towards growth and development. Policentricity is facilitated by efficient mobility and inter-nodal connection infrastructure. Considering the strategic spatial planning at the provincial level, it can be pointed out that the objectives of the West Rand District Vision 2016 come as surmounted pressure towards achieving developmental agenda of the Gauteng provincial sphere. It is clear that much work needs to be done to facilitate a fully-fledged ‘metropolitan’ urban centre in the West Rand through planning tools of densification and economic nodes. Chapter Three (3.4) also discussed the implications of spatial configurations on the economic development where the elements of functional polycentric relations amongst the local authorities can be traced within the West region. Below is an illustration of polycentric network within the West Rand District and its relation with other regions within the Gauteng province.

Figure 6: An Illustration of the functionally polycentric networks in West Rand and in the Gauteng Province



6.4.2. The Planning Process in Strategic Spatial Planning

The approach allows for the design of process where necessary resources are gathered for and implementation phases are outlined with clear timeframes, as well as embedded with constant analysis of effectiveness of results and impact. Thus, Albrechts (2001) defines strategic spatial planning as a thread of ideas, actions with measures and instruments that must be customised to every planning scenario to achieve the necessary outcomes. It is dependent on setting the process and the institutionalisation of designed plans. The author further illustrates that strategic spatial planning is generally a four-pronged development planning approach that looks at setting the vision; short-term and long-term plans; identifying relevant stakeholders and broader participation. What is important to note is the viability of facilitating a metro, bearing in mind the existing limitations of sensitive economic base and financial sustainability. Observing that Vision 2016 is a political determined development agenda, it would be prudent to consider some funding from the provincial sphere to close some operational costs.

a) Setting the Vision

Strategic spatial planning embraces the elements of communicative planning wherein democratic representation is upheld for envisioning a common desired future for all concerned constituents. Similarly, the strategic spatial approach acknowledges the importance of collective efforts by considering the historical factors, societal values, stakeholders and available resources in crafting a long term shared vision (Polat: 2009). Currently, the West Rand district embraces the principle of collective envisioning as demonstrated in the IDP process through consultation with the constituencies. The Vision 2016 is communicated through various platforms with proof of multi-government sphere participation. Clear milestones, as catalysts to the vision, are communicated with timeframes allocated towards the objectives of Vision 2016.

b) Short and Long term Planning

According to Albrechts (2004), the short and long-term plans within the strategic planning approach are integrated milestones towards the achievement of the long term vision. The short and long-term plans indicate the key activities of targets with allocated resources (financial and non-financial) that are delegated to personnel, or organs of institutions, to deliver on predetermined timeframes. These stages are weighed up to assess feasibility by conducting the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The West

Rand District stands to benefit by galvanising a sense of collective effort as a sustained organisational culture when line functions are encouraged to collaborate for a common purpose of achieving the short and long-term plans. Secondly, the level of expertise in the value chain of plans is heightened and becomes a human capital asset in the long term. Newman (2008) interposes by indicating that one of the challenges with strategic spatial planning is that it remains a highly normative purpose. Therefore, the actors are often confronted with tensions where misinterpretation of plans as well as roles and responsibilities arise. Strategic planning largely relies on constant scanning of the political, social, economic and environmental situations within the locality. The regular review and adjustments of the plans are part of the mechanisms to maintain focus towards the long term vision.

c) The Institutional Framework in Strategic Spatial Planning

The strategic spatial plans rely on ownership and accountability as well as monitoring over time in order to ensure consistency. The planning process rests heavily on the institutional framework that will determine the roles and responsibilities of various role players over the defined time period. Baker (2001) explains that a strategy matrix outlines the action plans with measurable objectives where various line functions and institutions are delegated the tasks to implement them. With this approach, the author emphasises the convenience of managing and monitoring the operational process and execution of oversight. However, the strategy development and implementation also involves the co-option of temporary task teams and advisory bodies under the apex of decision making structures.

The West Rand district demonstrates this aspect by co-opting important agencies for inputs into the Vision 2016 and some provincial departments. The Vision 2016 Strategic Framework outlines the various thematic areas in which committees and task teams are assigned responsibilities. In terms of cascading responsibilities and seeking efficiency, the district can also consider establishing the municipal entities. For instance, the City of Johannesburg Metro has established various municipal entities that derive the mandate from the city management through service level agreements. Such entities are implementing agencies for the key department of the municipality (Martin and Murray: 2008).

d) Inclusive Participation in Strategic Spatial Planning

In line with Healey's communicative theory, strategic spatial planning espouses the principles of inclusivity in forging a common vision. The spatial strategy document is presented to the broader public platforms for deliberation and inputs. Participation is a transcending element in strategy development from inception through to adoption of the final product. As Healey (1997:67) puts it that "strategic spatial plan-making is a process through which knowledge and value, rules and procedures are actively mobilized and transformed to produce new knowledge and value". Through this process, a set of intellectual capital is established through participatory structures. The West Rand aligns to this aspect of strategic planning through the convening of Vision 2016 Strategic Review Session of the district administrative management team, the IDP outreach programmes and periodic interactions with various agencies (Municipal Manager Respondent: 1st October 2012). The process of inclusive planning leads to the approval of a comprehensive integrated spatial development strategy by council with subsequent reviews over a period of time.

While strategic spatial planning seems applaudable for an integrated approach which considers the social, economic and political aspects of society, Faludi (2000) sums up the key principles that underpin it. The first premise is based on community involvement in decision-making that cultivates a sense ownership. Secondly, stakeholders are critical for regular inputs, and during the execution phase as some come with required expertise. Thirdly, coordination of hierarchical plans and facilitation of inputs for decision-making is pivotal in order to ensure alignment and consistency in the overarching high level strategies. Fifth, sustainability principle ensures the responsible use of natural resources to ensure a balance amongst competing environmental, socio-economic and political demands. Sixth, strategic spatial planning processes also rely on a realistic affordability assessment through the assessment of financial resources availability. These key considerations for sound strategic spatial planning respond well to the challenge of bringing together all the aspects of creating a competitive city. For one, strategic spatial planning approach is beneficial for the West Rand as it gives structure to the process; it identifies role-players and required resources can be identified in order to realise the long term 2016 Vision.

6.5. Synthesising the Implications of Planning Theories on Vision 2016

This section is a reconciliation of research findings and applied to the planning theories of collaborative planning, equity planning and strategic spatial planning. The relevance of

collaborative planning in the context of Vision 2016 is that it seeks to promote dialogue amongst various stakeholders in order to arrive at a common long-term vision. Embedded in collaborative planning is the soft and hard infrastructure that forms the essential basis for the successful outcomes. The strength lies on the interaction of networks that promote participation especially of the most marginalised groups. For the West Rand, this aspect is largely relegated to the political parties and there is a need to advance participation by inviting more advocacy groups. Collaborative leadership has been demonstrated in the West Rand wherein the leadership has set the tone for development and seeks legitimacy through community outreach programmes, as well as through soliciting support from the government institutions for collaboration. However, the Vision 2016 strategy largely remains a high level policy discussion with minimal exchange of ideas at the grass root level. The role of the district municipality as a public representative is to a great extent to provide platforms and support for dialogue through setting standards for engagement and necessary legal, administrative and capacity building instruments.

Equity planning is a complementary mechanism to respond to the shortcomings of collaborative approach such as the abuse of power to perpetually serve the elitist interests. From a normative and abstract context, equity planning gives standard purpose of leveraging resources to favor the least empowered sections of the community. Equality is an aspect ensures the basic right of equal access to basic services without any discrimination. However, the need assessment redirects the equitable distribution to where services are most needed. The socio-economic disparities within the district determine that harmonization of revenue will lead to deliberate prioritisation of the previously depressed areas in terms of services and economic opportunity. Ascertaining demands for equity planning takes shape in the form of high use of certain services and through submission by community members. The IDP process is instrumental in identifying demands and rationalizing decisions that will better serve the common good.

As such, planners are able to direct development where it can yield better competitiveness such as development of catalyst nodes and precincts. The access to services through the affordability is said to promote efficiency in accessing services where public sector falls short. However, there is validity in the counterarguments that it can promote continuous marginalisation and inequality to those who lack the financial power to buy public services. The West Rand district operated in the neo-liberal political economy and may need to

demonstrate strongly how this approach will result in equitable distribution of economic returns.

The strategic spatial planning is a democratic and vigorous process that encourages collective participation in setting the vision for development. It produces a framework for engagement and the process of achieving the short and long term goals. The creation of a competitive city in the West Rand district can be achieved through this spatially focused approach by understanding and implementing the development tools that will promote compactness of the newly merged municipalities. Economic nodes can be enhanced in order to introduce more diverse business hubs that are supported by development corridors. Strategic spatial planning emphasises collaboration of various stakeholders for effective implementation of plans. The aspect of process plans with different phases is necessary in order to trace progress, periodically review the process and outcomes. In applying this method, the district can appreciate the amount of expertise that is required to execute plans and the heightened role of oversight. While the process allows for broader engagement, development planners in the West Rand district must mitigate against derailing from the objectives due to other adversary motions during the engagement process.

6.6. Recommendations

a) The West Rand District as a Learning Institution

The implications of the neo-liberal global trends call for the establishment of flexible corporations and public institutions that are able to constantly adjust to the socio-economic climate. With the competing challenges of increasing economic growth, maintaining social orders, defining relevance in global market trends and improving the quality of living, the West Rand district is also inevitably required to constantly reform in order to address such challenges. Therefore, the West Rand Vision 2016 Strategic Framework must go beyond the details of institutional redesign, and also detail an organisational culture that its workers can identify with. The core values of the organisation must espouse innovation and service excellence that must be trickled down to the methods of delivering services. The relevant skills that can respond to the challenges and opportunities of transformation must be sought through attractive means and incentives. The West Rand district must further identify the institutional structure that enables creativity, responsiveness and accountability.

b) Strengthen Partnerships for Creating a Competitive City

The features of city competitiveness have been identified and discussed at length, together with the strength and existing shortcomings in the West Rand district. In response to the outlined challenges, it is recommended that the West Rand invests in forging relations with key organisations across the public and private spectrum. A network of partnerships can serve as advisory bodies and reference groups for the respective Transformation Committees. The strength of their technical and financial resources could minimise costs, as well as impart critical skills on the officials that will be exposed. Therefore, a body of knowledge can be an institutional asset that can enhance the competitiveness of the West Rand district and also have a significant role in the value chain of Gauteng regional competitiveness.

c) The Economic Development Strategy Should Yield Economic Outputs in all Municipal Functions

Usually, the economic development strategies are viewed as just a section within the IDP that must be treated in isolation with other sections such as the Spatial Development Framework and sectoral plans. The assumed end result of this approach is that the economic outputs are not embedded, nor closely monitored, throughout the respective functions of a municipality. A response to this challenge is to begin with elevating the economic development function to a more strategic level where the economic strategy can be a guide for all other functions to align themselves to the broader economic vision. The institutional design of the West Rand district must recognise the advantages of elevating LED by not only focusing on micro economic interventions, but to economic development approaches at a more regional and macro level. With this approach, economic growth then becomes everyone's business, each realising their contribution to the long-term economic vision. Spatial planning is a critical factor in designing the urban morphology that must facilitate economic integration, stimulate regional economic growth and guide growth and development in line with the overarching economic vision.

d) Build Empowerment for Social Capital

The collaborative planning and strategic spatial planning emphasises consultation and engagement with the broader society as a starting point to soliciting a shared vision and common aspirations at a particular locality. It allows for citizens, and other structures, of communities to partake in the policy making process, as well as legitimising the decisions taken. The West Rand district has institutionalised channels of facilitating public participation

through ward councillors and committees, roadshows and outreach programmes, as well as the use of media platforms. However, empowerment for people to participate in decision-making structures can be enhanced in the West Rand by maximising the opportunities of all citizens to participate. Through the acknowledgement of limitations such as social stature, lack of access to information and cultural beliefs must be addressed by equal processes and procedure. Notwithstanding the influence of power, even in the manner in which process and procedure are handled, the incorporation of advocacy and interest groups allows for critical perspective to these matters.

6.7. The Role of a Development Planner

Planning has been an evolving function that has been predominantly and conservatively placed under the town and regional planning line functions (Boettke: 1994). Times have evolved and shifted towards a need for a holistic approach in city planning. The new approach requires a consideration and a balancing action that encompasses the social, economic, environmental, financial as well as political aspects. The rationalisation of each of these fraternities is due to their interconnectedness. The decisions by one domain have causal adverse, or positive, effects to the rest. In that scenario, it is evident that there is a need for consensual agreements and to reach equilibrium.

With the similar view, the West Rand District requires the role and expertise of a Development Planner. The development vision of 2016 intends to upscale the living conditions of residents by strengthening the investment prospects that will yield job creation and provide efficient municipal services. Parallel to that, there are political dynamics that demand astute diplomacy during the engagements with different structures and intergovernmental relations. Furthermore, the prospects of a unicity can encourage an upsurge in the property and other investments that require adequate allocation of land. Linked to that are the environmental issues that will need to be protected and preserved. At the centre of these demands, the question is how a planner begins to exercise his / her role.

The Development Planner needs to be an individual with strategic thinking and diplomatic skills. These are necessary to be able to reconcile the extreme differing views and competing priorities. Institutionally, the location of such a practitioner needs to be close to the decision making process of the council with mandating powers so as to be able to give directives and also account. The stakeholder management abilities would assist in bringing together

stakeholders and to solicit strategic external partnerships. All such efforts will be with an in-borne understanding of the vision and the short and long-term goals of the council. In order to achieve objectivity and influence outcomes, the development theories lay a foundation for various scenarios.

For the purposes of facilitating the creating a competitive city, there are three major theories that emerge for the Development Planner in the West Rand district. Collaborative planning encourages inclusive participation in the decision-making process. It provides mitigation for adversary use of power and other socio-economic limitations through the use of independent public and private bodies to safeguard fairness and equity. Equity planning addresses the issue of redistributive justice in the manner in which goods and services can be rendered. It addresses the matters of basic human rights versus economic emancipation as basis to receive services. Development planning goes beyond the spatial delineation, but also incorporating the social, political, economic and environmental priorities. Strategic spatial planning is the amenable approach that draws on aspects of good governance, and is clear on process in terms of roles resources and risks. It allows for the constant review of implementation processes with the view of adequately adjusting to the environmental changes, as well as monitoring tools to assess outputs and impact.

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Appendix 1: Research Questionnaires

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CREATING COMPETITIVE CITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF WEST RAND UNICITY VISION 2016

1. What are the elements of the West Rand Unicity Vision 2016?

2. Identify the committees and structures developed for the Vision 2016 strategy

3. Do you think they are necessary?

Yes	No
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Please explain your answer:

4. What can be done to enhance the levels of service delivery:

Structures: _____

Processes _____

5. What is your role in the transformation process

6. What are the platforms for communication and participation in relation to the Vision 2016 transformation agenda?

7. Please rate their usefulness (1 – Highly satisfactory to 10- not satisfactory)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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8. What are the areas of concern posed by changing the local governance model in the West Rand?

9. How is this process changing or reinforcing the conventional democratic processes?

Representation_____

Consultation_____

Accountability_____

10. Do you think the new envisaged administrative model will yield better staff morale and productivity?

Yes	No
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Explain:

11. Describe the competitiveness of the West Rand District as a place to:

Live_____

Work_____

Leisure_____

12. What are the economic sectors for West Rand District that can generate employment?

13. What are your views on the merger local municipalities within the West Rand District?

14. In what ways can the Vision 2016 be made to be successfully achieved?

15. Overall, how would you rate the current services that are rendered by your local authority?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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