

Figure 2 : ELM Locality Map

## 2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Named after Hendrik van der Bijl, an electrical Engineer and Industrialist, Vanderbijlpark is located 56 km south of Johannesburg and is home to Vanderbijlpark steel industry hub, Arcelor Mittal previously known as ISCOR (South African Iron and Steel Corporation). Vanderbijlpark attained Municipal status in 1952. The town was designed in a circular design, which differs from the traditional grid design of most towns. It is divided into four distinct residential blocks, namely, CE (Central East); CW (Central West); SE (South East); and SW (South West). The different suburbs are then named as follows: CE 1 to CE 4, CW 1 to CW 6, SE 1 to SE 8 and SW 1 to SW 5. The other suburbs of Vanderbijlpark are Boipatong, Bophelong, Bonnane and Flora Gardens. There are also a number of smallholdings intermittently dispersed in no particularly designed configuration in the area.

Vereeniging town is situated 15 km east of Vanderbijlpark CBD. Vereeniging town was established in 1892 as a small town subsisting largely on the then thriving coal mining industry and now remains one of the most important industrial manufacturing and retail centres on the southern extremities of Gauteng Province. Vereeniging consists of Bedworthpark and nineteen other residential suburbs and the number is steadily growing.

Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark areas including previously surrogated black local authorities established for rudimentary administration of previously disadvantaged areas had separate administrations until the advent of a post 1994 new democratic political dispensation. In 2002 Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark towns and surrounding economically functional areas were amalgamated to form Emfuleni Local Municipality in terms of the provisions of the Local Government: Structures Act (Act no.117 of 1998).

Emfuleni Local Municipality is rich in history as it encapsulates the South African War with the signing of the peace treaty in Vereeniging in 1892, heritage assets such as the Sharpeville Monument and the liberation struggle epitomized by the signing of the Constitution of the Republic in Sharpeville in 1996. Even settlement patterns in Emfuleni are largely dictated by the history of the area.

## 2.3 STUDY AREA

The area under consideration (study area) is located to the south of the Vanderbijlpark Central Business District (CBD) across Barrage Road. Barrage Road is an important east-west dual carriageway daily distributing high volumes of traffic at its various intersections along its length between its intersection with Olga Kirsch Street to the west and R59 Motorway to the east.

The aforesaid area is also being transversed by three major north-south roads, namely; Ascot-on-Vaal Road east of Bedworthpark; Andries Potgieter Boulevard west of the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) and Louis Trichardt Boulevard west of South East (SEs) 7, 6 & 4 dominantly residential townships/suburbs. Discernibly the above mentioned transports arterials are characterized mainly by lower residential traffic volumes.

A variety of land uses within the subject area enjoy high accessibility and visibility due to existing provincial road (Barrage Road) and aforementioned boulevards (Class 4) in close proximity. See Study Area Figure 3.

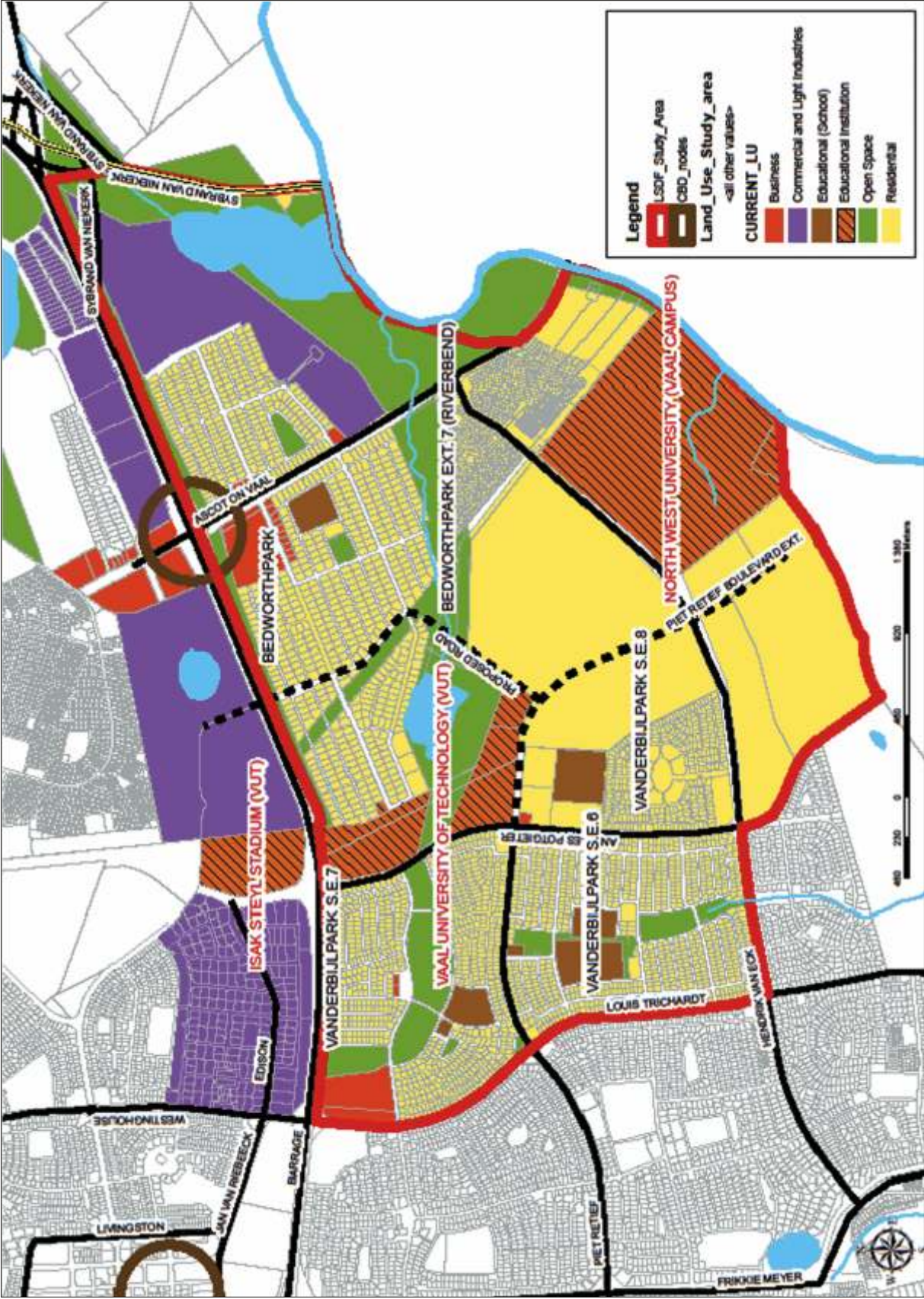


Figure 3 : Study Area Map

## 2.4 LAND USE

The study area is predominantly residential in nature comprising of SE 7, Bedworthpark, SE 6, SE 9, SE 10, SE 8 Extension 1 and 2 suburbs as is evident in the Land Use Map below. A budding regional node (Bedworthpark) is situated in the Eastern side of the study area. Other major land uses characterizing the study area include educational institutions, especially institutions of higher learning (VUT and NWU) whose sheer development and impact constitute major towering land use markedly dwarfing smaller land uses such as industrial, open spaces, business centres, restaurants and filling stations.

A green belt traceable from Leeuwkuil Dam southeast of Sharpeville which meanders through the study area until west of SE 7 is evident.

### 2.4.1 Residential

Residential stands in the study area range from an average of 900 square metres (medium density) to 1 700 square metres (low density). Boarding houses and illegal tenements have developed over time throughout the residential suburbs within the study area. This is as a result of lack of capacity by universities to meet the accommodation needs of its students. Only 18% of the students are accommodated on campus. The remaining 82%, which constitutes the majority of the students have to find alternative private accommodation mainly in SE 7 and Bedworthpark and other suburbs in the vicinity. This has given rise to overcrowding and other social ills now prevalent in the area.

Out of a total of 2 081 houses in the study area, about 167 have been converted into illegal tenements. Most of these houses are quite degraded and require substantial refurbishment. A noticeable diversity of land uses exist along main roads especially along Rossini Blvd, Piet Retief and Louis Trichardt Boulevard.

Emfuleni Spatial Development Framework has provided for the establishment of Micro Enterprises such as hair salons, offices, medical rooms, places of instruction, coffee shops etc along Boulevards within Emfuleni. Except for the above mentioned tenements, there are no backyard shacks in the study area

### 2.4.2 Nodes

There are two main nodes within the study area; namely, Bedworthpark Shopping Centre (20 000 GLA) situated in the north eastern part and Kollege Park Shopping Centre (2000 GLA) situated on the north-eastern quadrant of Colonel Gordon Street junction with General Lategan Street. Vaal University of Technology (VUT) and North-West University (NWU)-Vaal campus, have been identified as specialized tertiary nodes in terms of the Emfuleni Spatial Development Framework.

### 2.4.3 Industrial

Industrial establishments constitute evident land uses north of the study area across Barrage Road (R42). To the North of VUT, traversing from West of Vereeniging (R59) to the East of Vanderbijlpark CBD (Westinghouse Boulevard) along Barrage Road is a thriving industrial corridor. It is estimated that about 60% of Vanderbijlpark's working force work in these factories. The remainder work for the city, private businesses, retail industry and in the service sector.

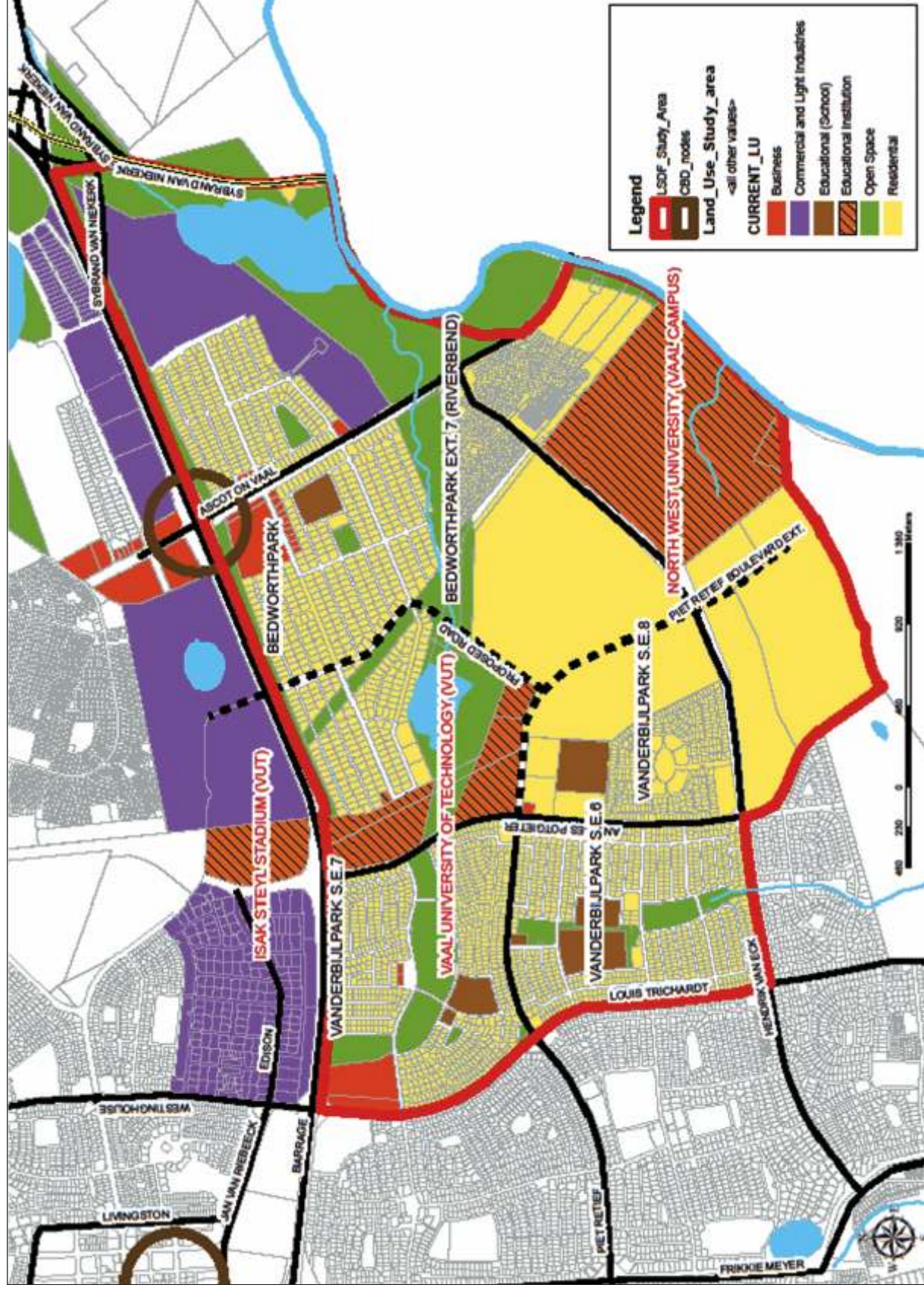


Figure 4: Predominately Land Uses

#### **2.4.4 Public Open Space**

There are quite a number of public open spaces in the area which are undeveloped and poorly maintained. Some of the green areas are disjointed and fragmented and no central theme connects them. The major green belt stretches from south of Barrage road through VUT campus to east of Palms Shopping Centre.

A perennial stream/canal flows from the West of the study area, through SE 7 Suburb, VUT, and Bedworthpark and into Leeuwkuil (Dhlomo) Dam. Leeuwkuil Dam is located North of Bedworthpark and the open space bordering a winding watercourse on either side presents an opportunity for the development of a fully-fledged recreational public open space.

Part of the greenbelt bordering Colonel Gordon Street to the south has been developed with a holding public transport facility. The facility is used by minibus taxis and buses daily ferrying largely students to and from VUT and NWU. See figure 5