

# Windhoek rejuvenation receives local support

With increased interest from the business community and locals alike, Windhoek's central business district (CBD) is on a path to revival.

Mayor Muesee Kazapua has noted that despite numerous challenges, Windhoek has seen significant developments over the past few years, including the construction of FNB's head office and the Hilton Hotel. Addressing a business forum in September last year, he said, "These mixed developments in our central business district area are clear testimony that our business community is positively responding to the city's call to revitalise the CBD area."



Refurbishment for Windhoek's Gustav Voigts

Other key developments in the area are the mixed-use 77 on Independence Avenue and the multimillion-dollar phased refurbishment of Gustav Voigts shopping centre. 77 on Independence, which offers a combination of retail, residential and office space, links Independence Avenue to the Old Breweries Craft Market, a precinct that already hosts a number of retailers, businesses and service providers, a gym and an art gallery.

## Rising demand for upscale inner-city shopping

The three-level Gustav Voigts complex, built in the 1970s, is located beneath the four-star Avani Hotel and Casino. It's home to brands such as Mr Price, Totalsports, Queenspark, Donna Claire and Pep, as well as a Checkers supermarket and local brands like Wecke & Voigts, Nakara and Safariland. Carel Fourie, CEO of Oryx Properties, the owner of the centre, says, "We've undertaken this refurbishment partly as a result of the growing demand for upscale inner-city shopping, driven by the professionals in the surrounding offices, banks and government buildings."

Fourth generation Voigts family member and Wecke & Voigts store manager and buyer Adriane Jandrell confirms that there's been an increase in the number of professionals frequenting the department store, which opened its doors 125 years ago and is the oldest in the country. The Avani Hotel and Casino has similarly seen an increase in patrons over the last year, according to general manager Rudie Putter, who points out that the convenience of the location allows for a healthy mix of tourists, corporate and conference guests.



## Government commitment

Ronald Uwukhaeb, marketing manager of the Hilton Windhoek, notes, “In 2011, Hilton Windhoek became Namibia’s first five-star accommodation establishment, and since then Windhoek has certainly become a hub for retailers and professionals. There are many plans for the revival of the CBD which are greatly supported by locals and retailers alike.”

“Council stands ready to avail land for developments that it deems will make positive impacts in the livelihoods of our people, particularly in the western suburbs of the city,” Mayor Kazapua said last year. The city has also committed to operational upgrades to improve traffic flow and improved park maintenance.

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