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Last weekend saw the exciting culmination of 18 months of planning with the arrival of an enormous 125 ton truck, all the way from Sishen Mine in the Northern Cape, to the city centre.

Eighteen months ago, a simple question sparked the imagination of the South Western Improvement District (SWID) board, "Why isn't there any street furniture in the SWID that speaks to mining in the present?"

With that the wheels were set in motion to source a piece of mining equipment that could become part of the SWID's mining theme. The result has been a massive donation by Anglo American and The Chamber of Mines of the 125 ton workhorse, known as a Unit Rig Mark 36 payload haul truck.

The South-Western Improvement District (SWID) is characterised by financial institutions and corporate head offices and covers 24 blocks in the South-Western part of the city. The area incorporates the Standard Bank Superblock Complex and the head offices of various organisations including the Chamber of Mines, BHP Billiton, and SA Eagle. Other organisations within the district include the African National Congress in the Walter Sisulu House, the Rand Club, Samancor, Anglo Platinum, Anglo Operations, South African Revenue Services, National Union of Mine Workers, National Government, Provincial Government, Engineer Industries Pension Fund, Peoples Bank Head Office, Johnnic, and many others.

The Unit Rig had recently gone into retirement after 20 years of faithful service at Kumba's flagship operation, Sishen Mine. Opened in 1947, Shishen Mine, located approximately 280 km north-west of Kimberley, is one of the seven largest open cast mines in the world with an open pit approximately 11 km long, 1.5 km wide and almost 400m deep. It operates 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Before going into retirement, this mechanical giant would haul the mine's valuable iron ore to the crusher, or help to clear waste from the site.

As the managers of the SWID, Urban Genesis Management (UGM) facilitated the process of securing and preparing an appropriate site for the Unit Rig. The Westgate transport hub at the corner of Ntemo Piliso and Hall Streets serves as the entrance to the SWID where pedestrians and commuters cannot miss this monument to modern mining force and technology.

This project proved to be enormous on all fronts. Transporting the giant Unit Rig from its home at Shishen Mine in the Northern Cape required two Transcor trucks, travelling over six days. Once the trucks arrived on the outskirts of Johannesburg, they were escorted into the city by JMPD who had to temporarily close off roads to allow the Transcor drivers enough space to manoeuvre around corners and up side streets.

During the early hours of Sunday morning, while the Transcor trucks were still making their way towards the city, the crane used to lift the 125 ton rig into place was greeted on site by UGM's operations managers, Norman Maluleke and Sylvia Pilane.

Prior to all the activity of Sunday morning, UGM had ensured that the traders were relocated from the site, the bollards were removed and the CCTV cables were taken away to ensure they were not ripped out by one of the numerous trucks required to deliver the sections of the crane and the rig itself.

With everything in place, UGM have reinstalled the CCTV cables and provided 24 hour guards dedicated to watching over the rig.

This Mark 36 125 ton payload haul truck stands at the entrance of the SWID, courtesy of Kumba Iron Ore, as a testament to man's mechanical genius and to the glorious abundance of minerals found throughout South Africa.

The South Western Improvement District (SWID) is one of many City Improvement Districts managed by Urban Genesis Management. Others near the city centre include the Braamfontein Management District and the Newtown Improvement District. Urban Genesis helps to manage the public space within the prescribed boundaries of these districts and provide supplementary services to those provided by the local council. The idea is to create a clean and safe environment for visitors, shoppers, business and residents and foster an identity for each area.