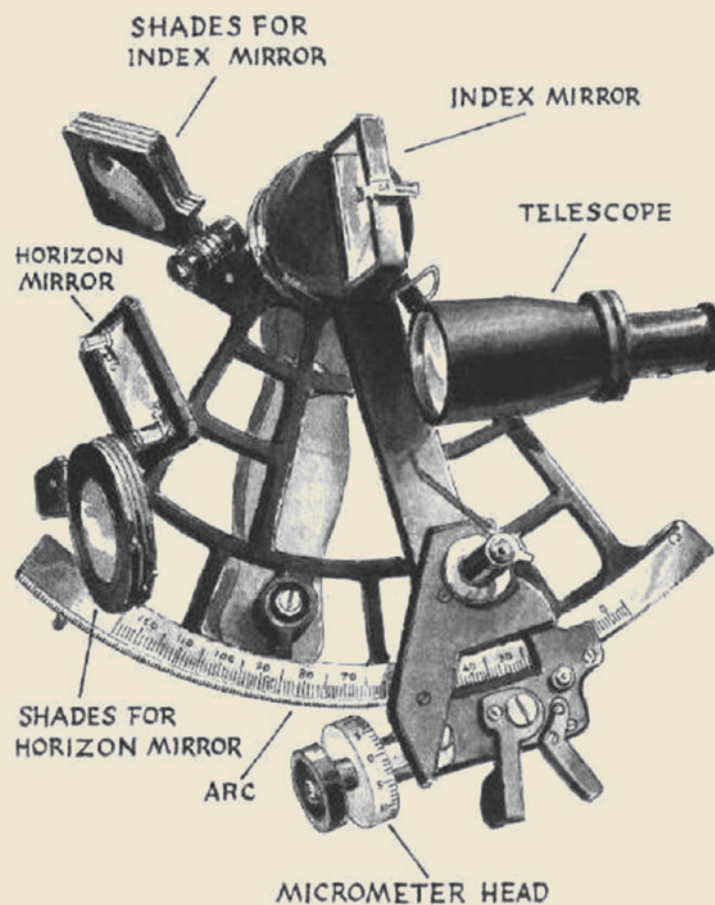


PROSPECTUS

The JoburgLAB_

A Laboratory for Radical Pragmatism and Institutional Experimentation in Johannesburg

A counter-intuitive and rigorously informed initiative
to read and operate with more cunning and boldness
within the inner-city of Johannesburg



*There's gold everywhere, We just
need to look with the right kind
of eyes and the right kind of
mind.*

an initiative of
Johannesburg Inner City Partnership

led by
Thireshen Govender

& supported by
Graduate School of Architecture (TBC)
(University of Johannesburg)

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Mark Lewis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Johannesburg’s inner city is in a state of profound transition. Longstanding institutional and infrastructural failures have intensified, producing visible breakdown across governance, service delivery, safety, maintenance, and public space. Yet this moment cannot be read only as collapse. The inner city continues to function through dense networks of informal practices, entrepreneurial activity, parallel systems of care and control, and spatial improvisation. People live here. Livelihoods are embedded here. Histories and emerging cultures are actively formed here. Capital is exposed here.

There is still something to lose — and therefore something to shape.

JoburgLAB is founded in response to this condition. Housed institutionally within the Johannesburg Inner City Partnership (JICP), the lab operates as a platform for understanding, testing, and inducing new forms of city-making at a moment when existing institutions are under strain and new arrangements are already emerging. JoburgLAB does not begin with solutions. It begins with the conviction that **how we read the city determines how we act within it.**

The lab is grounded in close, evidence-based observation of how Johannesburg’s inner city actually works: how people secure livelihoods, how safety is produced and contested, how space is made and remade, how infrastructure fails and is compensated for, and how governance is informally rehearsed where the state is absent or uneven. These conditions are approached not as anomalies to be corrected, but as signals — partial, fragile, and often contradictory — of alternative urban logics already in motion.

JoburgLAB advances a position of **Radical Pragmatism**. It deliberately holds together speculative and practical modes of thinking, refusing the false choice between visionary critique and incremental action. This stance allows the lab to engage complexity without paralysis, and to prototype small, strategic, and reversible interventions that induce new behaviours, practices, and institutional arrangements. Change, in this view, is not imposed wholesale but cultivated carefully.

The lab organises its work around five interrelated thematic fields:

- 1. **order, breakdown, and improvisation;**
- 2. **economies of survival, livelihoods, and aspiration;**
- 3. **safety, power, and the informal state;**
- 4. **infrastructure, space, and the commons; and**
- 5. **absence, governance, and institutional failure.**

These themes function as lenses rather than silos, enabling JoburgLAB to work across social, spatial, economic, and institutional domains simultaneously.

JoburgLAB engages a broad ecology of partners — across civil society, academia, the private sector, and government. Property owners and market actors are approached not as drivers of the agenda, but as participants with material exposure to the city’s future and a potential role in responsible experimentation. Civic organisations, researchers, and public institutions are engaged as collaborators in learning, testing, and translation.

Through observation, diagnosis, prototyping, and translation, JoburgLAB seeks to operate as a leading entity in understanding and shaping Johannesburg’s current threshold condition. Its ambition is not scale for its own sake, nor consensus at all costs, but clarity, accountability, and consequence. The lab exists to ensure that this moment of volatility is neither wasted nor surrendered — but read carefully, engaged critically, and shaped deliberately toward more inclusive and resilient urban futures.

01
CONTEXT &
IMPERATIVE

*Johannesburg as a stress-test city:
failure, improvisation, possibility*

01 CONTEXT & IMPERATIVE

Image: Mark Lewis

1.1. JOHANNESBURG AT A THRESHOLD

Johannesburg's inner city is experiencing a convergence of institutional and infrastructural strain. Systems of governance, service delivery, maintenance, safety, and spatial management are increasingly misaligned with the realities they are meant to serve. The effects are visible and cumulative: deteriorating infrastructure, contested public space, uneven safety, informal substitution for formal systems, and widening disparities in access and care.

This condition is not new, but it has intensified. What distinguishes the current moment is not simply decline, but exposure. Longstanding weaknesses are now unmistakable, measurable, and widely acknowledged across public, private, and civic sectors.

Yet this moment should not be read only as failure. The inner city continues to function through a dense web of informal practices, negotiated arrangements, and adaptive behaviours. In the absence of coherent institutional coordination, people, organisations, and markets are actively compensating — unevenly at times, but persistently.

Johannesburg is not only in crisis; it is in a threshold condition — where existing systems are under strain and new forms of organisation are emerging in partial, provisional ways.

1.2. THERE IS STILL SOMETHING TO LOSE

Despite deep compromise, the inner city is not a space of abandonment.

- People live here.
- Livelihoods are embedded here.
- Histories — layered, unresolved, and active — are held here.
- New cultures, practices, and forms of belonging are emerging here.

Crucially, the inner city also carries **significant financial exposure**. Property owners, investors, small-scale landlords, and institutional stakeholders have capital tied to this urban condition — capital that is increasingly exposed rather than secured.

This reality matters.

JoburgLAB begins from the position that the inner city is neither a blank slate nor a lost cause. It is a space of **shared stake** — social, cultural, and economic. To disengage from it is not neutrality, but a decision with consequences.

Recognising that there is still something to lose creates a different ethical and strategic frame — one grounded in responsibility, attentiveness, and deliberate participation.

1.3. FROM CRISIS TO OPPORTUNITY

Moments of crisis are also moments of heightened malleability. When systems are stable, change is slow and incremental. When systems are under strain, the future becomes more open — but also more contested.

Johannesburg's current threshold condition is already being shaped: by neglect, withdrawal, opportunistic extraction, and fragmented short-term interventions.

JoburgLAB proposes a different response. Rather than reacting prematurely or retreating defensively, the lab argues for **careful reading before decisive action** — understanding how the city is already reorganising itself spatially, economically, and institutionally, and intervening with precision rather than force.

The opportunity of this moment lies not in grand solutions, but in identifying leverage points, testing alternative arrangements, and inducing new practices that can stabilise and reorient urban life over time.

This is not optimism. It recognises that inaction is itself a form of action, and that the present moment, however compromised, remains shapeable.

1.4. WHY A LAB, AND WHY NOW

The complexity of Johannesburg's inner city exceeds the capacity of single-sector responses. No one institution, discipline, or actor can adequately diagnose or address the conditions at play.

A laboratory is required — not as a site of abstraction, but as a **working platform** for observation, learning, experimentation, and translation across sectors.

JoburgLAB exists to hold this work at a moment when institutional strain, informal substitution, and exposed risk demand clarity rather than haste. The lab does not promise certainty; it offers a structured way to **pay attention, test carefully, and act responsibly** in a volatile urban moment.

02
THE PROBLEM
WITH EXISTING
RESPONSES

*Why current institutions, plans,
and consultancies are not enough*



Image: Mark Lewis

2.1. STRUCTURAL BREAKDOWN, NOT TEMPORARY FAILURE

Johannesburg's inner city has not suffered from a lack of attention. It has been subject to repeated plans, task teams, pilot projects, enforcement drives, and policy cycles across multiple administrations. Yet these efforts have not altered the underlying trajectory of decline, fragmentation, and uneven care. The issue is not episodic failure, but structural breakdown.

The city's administrative apparatus is increasingly misaligned with the realities it is meant to govern. Capacity and capability are limited, institutional memory is thin, and coordination across departments remains weak. More fundamentally, existing administrative frameworks struggle to comprehend the counter-intuitive logics of the contemporary African city — where informality, hybridity, improvisation, and parallel systems are not exceptions, but organising principles. As a result, governance lags behind reality, responding reactively rather than shaping conditions deliberately. This gap continues to widen as the city reorganises itself beyond the reach of conventional bureaucratic models.

2.2. FRAGMENTATION AND THE LIMITS OF PLANNING

Current responses remain dominated by fragmented, sector-based approaches. Safety, housing, infrastructure, property, social services, and economic development are addressed in isolation, despite being deeply entangled in practice. This produces partial interventions that may stabilise one domain while intensifying pressure elsewhere. The lived city does not operate in silos — and neither do its crises.

At the same time, the idea of a coordinated, comprehensive planning solution has become increasingly outdated. Johannesburg's inner city is shaped less by linear implementation than by overlapping negotiations, informal adaptations, and entrepreneurial responses to failure. Planning frameworks that assume predictability, control, and compliance struggle to engage these conditions. The result is a cycle of hit-and-miss interventions: some effective in the short term, many misaligned with how the city actually functions. What is lacking is a more intelligent, adaptive, and nuanced model of development practice.

2.2. CAPITAL WITHOUT A RECALIBRATED IMAGINATION

Market-led responses have been similarly constrained. Capital, insurance, and funding institutions have not meaningfully recalibrated their models to engage the realities of inner-city Johannesburg. Investment continues to favour already-stabilised enclaves, while large areas remain exposed to ongoing risk and neglect. Where capital does enter more volatile contexts, it often does so defensively, prioritising insulation over experimentation.

Yet the inner city is also a site of intense entrepreneurialism, innovation, and adaptive economic practice. Informal markets, hybrid ownership models, and improvised systems of care and control continue to generate value — albeit unevenly and precariously. These dynamics are rarely understood as investable conditions. No shared frameworks exist to translate urban messiness into productive, responsible investment strategies. As a result, opportunity is either overlooked or extracted opportunistically, rather than cultivated with long-term consequence.

2.4. WHAT IS MISSING, AND WHAT THE LAB ENABLES

Across governance, planning, and investment, a common absence is evident: a grounded conceptual framework capable of making sense of Johannesburg's inner-city condition as it is, rather than as it ought to be. Without such a framework, responses remain reactive, fragmented, and misaligned. Inaction, withdrawal, and opportunistic extraction continue to shape outcomes, even when framed as caution or pragmatism.

What is required is not another master plan or isolated programme, but a different mode of engagement — one that combines close observation, critical interpretation, experimentation, and translation. JoburgLAB is positioned to operate in this gap. The lab aims to develop the analytical, ethical, and imaginative tools needed to read the city accurately and to recalibrate governance and investment practices accordingly. Its purpose is to convert volatility, improvisation, and risk into informed, accountable, and more productive forms of urban development.

03 WHAT IS JOBURGLAB_



*A civic intelligence laboratory —
not a think tank, not consultancy*



Image: Mark Lewis

3.1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

JoburgLAB is a laboratory for understanding, testing, and inducing new forms of city-making in Johannesburg's inner city. It exists to work within conditions of crisis and volatility with clarity, care, and imagination.

The lab's purpose is not to deliver predetermined solutions, but to create the conditions for **better judgment and more responsible action**. It does this by combining observation, research, experimentation, and translation across sectors that rarely work together productively.

JoburgLAB is oriented toward institutional questions as much as spatial ones. It asks how governance, infrastructure, investment, and everyday practices interact — and how alternative arrangements might be induced through carefully designed interventions.

At its core, JoburgLAB exists to ensure that this moment of urban uncertainty is **read carefully rather than reacted to hastily**, and that the futures being shaped are intentional rather than accidental.

3.2. WHAT JOBURGLAB IS — AND IS NOT

JoburgLAB is deliberately difficult to categorise.

It is **not** a consultancy, a policy unit, a think tank, or a design studio in the conventional sense. It does not produce masterplans, nor does it operate as an advocacy platform.

JoburgLAB **is** a working laboratory: a platform for inquiry, testing, and learning grounded in real urban conditions. It operates between architecture, urbanism, governance, finance, and civic practice, without collapsing into any single discipline.

The lab values precision over scale, experimentation over prescription, and learning over certainty. It is designed to work slowly when necessary and decisively when conditions demand it.

By resisting easy categorisation, JoburgLAB maintains the flexibility required to engage complexity without becoming captured by any single institutional or sectoral agenda.

3.3. INSTITUTIONAL HOME AND SCOPE

JoburgLAB is housed institutionally within the **Johannesburg Inner City Partnership (JICP)**, which provides a stable platform from which the lab can operate, convene, and experiment.

The JICP's position at the intersection of public, private, and civic interests makes it a critical institutional home for the lab. This relationship allows JoburgLAB to engage real governance challenges, property realities, and operational constraints, while retaining the independence required for critical inquiry and experimentation.

JoburgLAB's primary focus is Johannesburg's inner city. However, the questions it addresses — institutional failure, informal substitution, infrastructure breakdown, and emergent urban practices — are shared by many cities across the African continent.

The lab is grounded locally, but **legible beyond Johannesburg**, positioning the city as a reference point within broader debates on African urban futures.

3.4. ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP

JoburgLAB is supported academically by the **University of Johannesburg's Graduate School of Architecture**, which serves as the lab's primary academic partner.

This partnership grounds the lab's work in rigorous research, critical inquiry, and pedagogical experimentation, while ensuring that its outputs remain engaged with real urban conditions rather than abstract theory. Through this relationship, JoburgLAB draws on the Graduate School of Architecture's commitment to practice-based research, design-research methodologies, and public-facing scholarship.

The academic partnership enables the lab to test ideas through studios, research projects, publications, and public discourse, and to contribute to the training of future practitioners working in contexts of volatility and inequality.

Importantly, this relationship supports reflection and critique without constraining the lab's operational independence.



Image: Mark Lewis

3.5. LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION

JoburgLAB is co-founded and led by Thireshen Govender, an architect, urbanist, and researcher whose work focuses on how cities function under conditions of inequality, volatility, and institutional strain.

The founder’s role within JoburgLAB is **directional and custodial**. It involves setting the intellectual and ethical orientation of the lab, ensuring rigor in observation and research, and holding the balance between critique and constructive engagement.

Thireshen brings to the lab extensive experience in practice-based research, teaching, and public inquiry, including the development of forensic urban reading methods through Rogue Economies and the co-authorship of Township Economies: People, Spaces, Practices.

Leadership within JoburgLAB is exercised not through authorship alone, but through clarity, consistency, and accountability — holding the conditions under which collaboration, experimentation, and learning can occur.

3.6. MODES OF PARTICIPATION

JoburgLAB engages partners through clearly defined modes of participation. These are not services offered, but forms of shared inquiry and engagement shaped by risk, urgency, and opportunity.

Strategic Participation

Partners contribute to framing questions, priorities, and directions. This mode shapes intent rather than outcomes and requires shared responsibility for uncertainty.

Collaborative Experimentation

Partners work with the lab to design and test catalytic interventions. This mode involves shared risk, provisional outcomes, and learning through action.

Embedded Knowledge Exchange

Ongoing mutual learning through documentation, dialogue, and reflection. Knowledge is generated, shared, and translated rather than extracted.

Operational Contribution

Partners contribute capacity, access, infrastructure, or situational support that enables experimentation without determining agenda or conclusions.

Insight and Recommendation Engagement

JoburgLAB may generate insights and recommendations calibrated to specific contexts, grounded in observation and experimentation rather than predefined briefs.

Financial contributors participate as **enablers**, supporting the work without directing its content or outcomes.

Participation in JoburgLAB requires openness to experimentation, tolerance for ambiguity, and a willingness to engage urban complexity *otherwise*.

04

FRAMING THE RESPONSE

*Principles, posture, ethics, and
refusal points*



Image: Mark Lewis

4.1. SEEING & UNDERSTANDING BEFORE ACTING

JoburgLAB is founded on a simple but demanding premise: **how we read the city determines how we act within it**. In contexts of crisis and volatility, premature action often reproduces the very failures it seeks to address. Before intervening spatially, institutionally, or programmatically, there is a need to understand what is already at work.

This means cultivating a mode of attention that is curious rather than corrective, analytical rather than reactive. Emergent urban practices — informal economies, improvised infrastructures, parallel systems of safety and care — are approached not as deviations from an ideal city, but as responses to real conditions. They are signals of how the city is reorganising itself under pressure.

JoburgLAB adopts a practice of **seeing differently**: reading beyond official representations, attending to what is hidden or overlooked, and recognising that many future institutions are already being rehearsed in partial and fragile forms.

4.2. RADICAL PRAGMATISM

Urban discourse often splits between the radical and the pragmatic. One privileges critique and speculation; the other prioritises feasibility and incremental change. JoburgLAB rejects this separation.

Instead, the lab operates from a position of **Radical Pragmatism** — deliberately holding speculative imagination and grounded action together. This stance allows the lab to remain ambitious without becoming detached, and practical without becoming timid.

Radical Pragmatism does not seek comprehensive solutions or masterplans. It works through **small, strategic, and reversible interventions** that test alternative arrangements and learn from their effects. In volatile contexts, progress is rarely linear. It is iterative, provisional, and responsive to feedback from the ground.

This approach allows JoburgLAB to speculate responsibly, act precisely, and remain open to revision as conditions evolve.

4.3. WHAT COUNTS AS RETURN?

We are operating in conditions of systemic failure. Governance institutions are weakening. Infrastructure is breaking down. Social systems are under strain. Food insecurity is rising. Property costs remain high while public rates, utilities, and basic services are increasingly unreliable. This is not context — it is the terrain of investment itself.

In this environment, a narrow fixation on financial yield is no longer sufficient. Return must include the capacity to stabilise urban life under pressure, reduce exposure to risk, and restore basic functionality to everyday systems.

Return also has a cultural and speculative dimension. It includes the courage to think beyond inherited postcolonial models that no longer hold, to test new institutional and infrastructural arrangements, and to imagine futures that are not simply repairs of a broken past.

To invest now is to take a position on what our cities are allowed to become.

4.4. OBSERVATION AS FOUNDATION

At the core of JoburgLAB's work is **observation** — sustained, evidence-based, and interpretive attention to how the city actually functions.

Observation precedes strategy.

This includes fieldwork, mapping, documentation, and close reading of everyday practices. It involves tracing flows of people, goods, money, authority, and care; identifying points of breakdown and substitution; and understanding how formal and informal systems overlap and interact.

This approach resists anecdote and assumption. It builds an evidentiary base that allows responses to be precise rather than generic, and accountable rather than speculative.

By grounding action in careful observation, JoburgLAB ensures that interventions are informed by lived realities rather than abstract models or inherited assumptions.



Image: Mark Lewis

4.5. INFRASTRUCTURE OTHERWISE

JoburgLAB challenges prevailing assumptions about infrastructure — not only in form, but in how it is financed, valued, and justified. Conventional infrastructure investment is typically tied to long-term capital horizons, fixed return profiles, and established models of bankability and securitisation developed for more stable institutional contexts. In Johannesburg's inner city, these assumptions increasingly constrain what can be imagined and what can be done.

The lab advances the idea of **Infrastructure Otherwise**: an approach that recognises the need for different returns on investment, shifted horizons of value, and alternative forms of bankability. In volatile urban conditions, not all value is immediately financial. Some returns are operational, behavioural, social, institutional, or temporal — realised through improved safety, stabilised property performance, increased use and footfall, reduced risk exposure, and the cultivation of trust, care, and shared responsibility over time.

Infrastructure Otherwise asks whether **small, catalytic interventions** can unlock disproportionate effects. Rather than deferring action until large-scale projects meet traditional investment criteria, the lab explores curated infrastructural actions with a clear operational bias — interventions designed to function immediately, test assumptions, and generate evidence. These may be temporary or permanent, soft or hard, spatial or organisational. Their purpose is not only delivery, but learning.

This moment demands experimentation. Johannesburg has always been a prospector city — founded on risk, speculation, and the testing of uncertain ground. That legacy now calls for a different kind of prospecting: one oriented toward institutional imagination and new urban possibilities. In the context of African urban futures, return must include the capacity to pioneer models that are relevant, desired, and transferable beyond the city itself.

There is little to lose by trying — provided experimentation is undertaken with **clarity, curiosity, and boldness**. Infrastructure Otherwise positions Johannesburg not as a site of deferred investment, but as a testing ground for new infrastructural logics capable of shaping more responsive, inclusive, and consequential urban futures.

05
CORE THEMATIC
FIELDS OF
ENQUIRY

*What we study, map, and
intervene in*

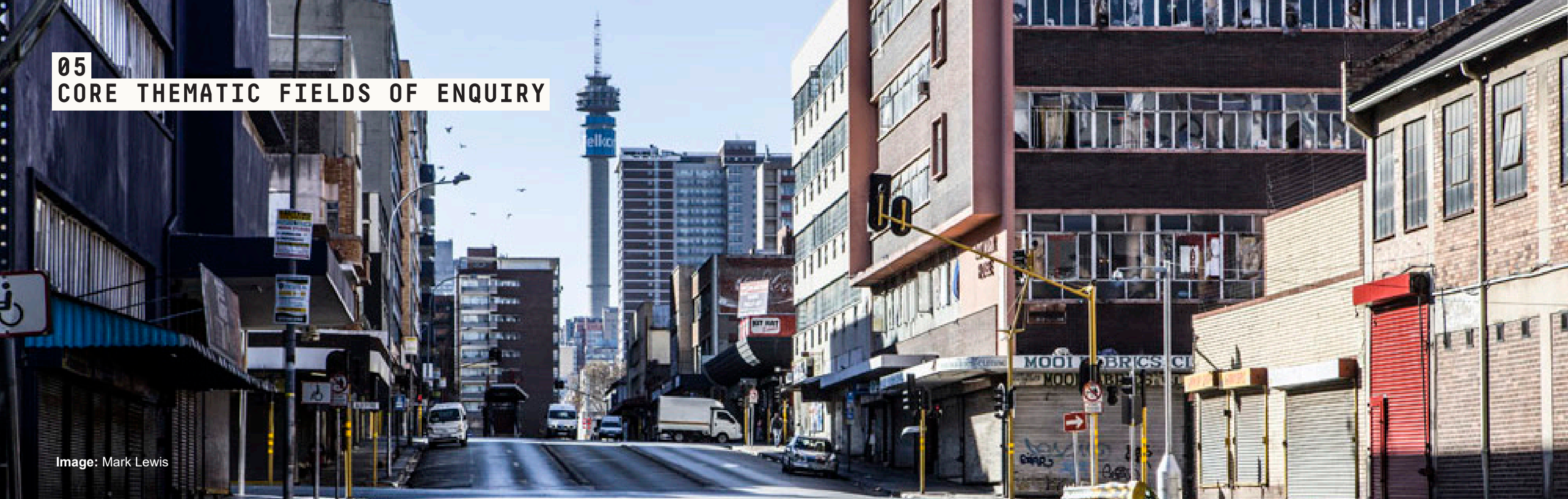


Image: Mark Lewis

JoburgLAB organises its work around six interrelated thematic fields of inquiry. These fields do not function as silos, programmes, or areas of specialisation. Rather, they operate as analytical lenses through which the inner city is read, interpreted, and engaged. Each field foregrounds a set of questions that recur across Johannesburg's inner city and across many African urban contexts shaped by volatility, informality, and institutional strain.

The fields are deliberately porous. They overlap, intersect, and at times contradict one another, reflecting the complexity of the city itself. JoburgLAB works across these fields simultaneously, recognising that urban conditions are rarely reducible to a single domain and that meaningful intervention requires holding multiple dimensions in view at once.

Together, these fields establish a shared intellectual terrain for observation, experimentation, and learning.

5.1. ORDER, BREAKDOWN, AND IMPROVISATION

This field examines how urban order is produced, disrupted, and reconstituted under conditions of institutional fragility. In Johannesburg's inner city, formal systems of regulation, maintenance, and management are frequently incomplete or unevenly applied. Yet this does not result in simple disorder. Instead, new forms of order emerge through improvisation, negotiation, and everyday practice.

JoburgLAB attends to how people adapt to breakdown, how informal rules take shape, and how provisional arrangements stabilise daily life. Breakdown is approached not only as failure, but as a condition that reveals alternative logics of organisation. This field asks how improvisation functions as both a survival strategy and a form of urban intelligence — and how such practices might inform more responsive institutional arrangements.

5.2. ECONOMIES OF SURVIVAL, LIVELIHOODS, AND ASPIRATION

This field focuses on how livelihoods are produced and sustained in contexts of precarity. Johannesburg's inner city hosts dense and diverse economic practices, ranging from informal trade and micro-enterprise to hybrid ownership models and speculative activity. These economies are often poorly understood, undervalued, or rendered invisible within formal policy and investment frameworks.

JoburgLAB examines not only how people survive economically, but how they pursue aspiration, mobility, and security under constrained conditions. Attention is given to the spatial, social, and infrastructural dimensions of livelihood-making, as well as to the risks and vulnerabilities embedded within them. This field seeks to move beyond deficit-based readings of informality toward more grounded understandings of value, productivity, and economic agency.

5.3. SAFETY, POWER, AND THE INFORMAL STATE

Safety in the inner city is produced through complex and contested arrangements that extend beyond formal policing and regulation. This field investigates how power, authority, protection, and coercion are organised in practice — often through informal, hybrid, or extra-legal means.

JoburgLAB examines the multiple actors involved in producing safety, including residents, private security, informal enforcers, civic organisations, and market actors. It asks how legitimacy is negotiated, how violence and care coexist, and how informal systems compensate for institutional absence. Rather than treating the informal state as an anomaly, this field seeks to understand its logics, limits, and implications for governance, accountability, and urban justice.



Image: Mark Lewis

5.4. INFRASTRUCTURE, SPACE, AND THE COMMONS

This field addresses infrastructure not only as technical provision, but as a social, spatial, and institutional practice. In the inner city, infrastructure is frequently improvised, shared, degraded, or repurposed in response to failure or neglect. Formal systems coexist with informal substitutions, producing uneven access and contested commons.

JoburgLAB examines how infrastructure shapes everyday life, economic activity, and collective use of space. This includes attention to maintenance, repair, and operational realities, as well as to questions of ownership, responsibility, and care. The field provides a foundation for exploring alternative infrastructural models — including small, catalytic interventions — that prioritise functionality, adaptability, and shared value over scale alone.

5.5. ABSENCE, GOVERNANCE, AND INSTITUTIONAL FAILURE

Rather than treating governance failure as an abstract condition, this field examines how institutional absence is produced, experienced, and managed on the ground. It asks where responsibility is unclear, where mandates overlap or collapse, and how people and organisations compensate in the gaps.

JoburgLAB investigates how governance is informally rehearsed in the absence of coherent authority, and how such arrangements both stabilise and strain urban life. Attention is given to the limits of existing administrative frameworks and to the political and ethical consequences of neglect, withdrawal, and fragmentation. This field foregrounds institutional questions as central to urban futures, rather than as secondary to spatial or economic concerns.

5.6. KNOWLEDGE, REPRESENTATION, AND URBAN LEGIBILITY

Cities are governed not only through policy and capital, but through knowledge: how urban conditions are described, measured, mapped, and narrated. This field interrogates the production of urban knowledge and its consequences for governance, investment, and public discourse.

JoburgLAB examines which aspects of the inner city are made visible or invisible, which data is considered authoritative, and how dominant representations shape action. It attends to the limits of official statistics, plans, and indicators, and explores alternative modes of documentation, mapping, and storytelling. By enhancing urban legibility without oversimplification, this field supports more informed judgment and opens space for different forms of engagement and investment.

06 MODES OF OPERATION

*How JoburgLAB works in
practice — methods, rhythms,
tools*

06 MODES OF OPERATION

Image: Mark Lewis

JoburgLAB operates through a set of interrelated modes rather than a fixed sequence of steps. These modes describe how the lab works in practice: how it builds understanding, decides when and how to act, collaborates without capture, and learns from engagement in volatile urban conditions. They are designed to be adaptive rather than prescriptive, allowing the lab to respond to shifting realities without losing intellectual rigor or ethical clarity.

The modes reflect JoburgLAB's commitment to Radical Pragmatism: combining careful reading with decisive action, and experimentation with responsibility. They function as working rhythms that guide engagement across governance, infrastructure, investment, and everyday urban practice.

6.1. SITUATED OBSERVATION & URBAN READING

JoburgLAB begins with **sustained, situated observation** of Johannesburg's inner city. This involves close, **on-the-ground engagement through fieldwork, mapping, documentation, and direct encounters with everyday practices**. Observation is not extractive data collection, but an attentive process of urban reading that privileges lived realities over abstract representations.

The lab focuses on how the city actually functions: how livelihoods are secured, how safety is produced, how infrastructure breaks down and is substituted for, and how informal and formal systems overlap. Attention is given to what is often overlooked, obscured, or rendered illegible within official accounts. This mode resists premature interpretation and avoids treating visibility as neutrality. By cultivating depth, patience, and presence, JoburgLAB builds an evidentiary base that grounds all subsequent action in the realities of the city as it is, not as it is assumed to be.

6.2. DIAGNOSTIC FRAMING AND SENSE-MAKING

Observation alone is insufficient without interpretation. In this mode, JoburgLAB synthesises insights across thematic fields to develop **diagnostic frames** that make complexity intelligible without reducing it. This involves **identifying patterns, tensions, leverage points, and contradictions** shaping the inner city's current condition.

Rather than seeking definitive explanations, the lab constructs **working interpretations** that can guide judgment and action. Diagnostic framing holds multiple logics in view simultaneously — institutional, economic, spatial, and social — and recognises that urban conditions are often shaped by competing forces. This mode enables the lab to move from **description to discernment**, clarifying what matters, where intervention may be possible, and what risks are involved. **Sense-making is iterative and collective**, refined through dialogue with partners and revisited as conditions evolve.

6.3. STRATEGIC EXPERIMENTATION AND PROTOTYPING

JoburgLAB engages in **strategic experimentation** to test alternative arrangements in real urban conditions. Interventions are designed to be **small, targeted, and reversible**, allowing assumptions to be tested without overcommitting resources or locking in unintended consequences. Where appropriate, experiments may be situated within established spatial frameworks, such as the **JICP Walkable Network**, where continuity, scale, and institutional legitimacy support **cumulative learning** without prescribing outcomes. Experiments may be **spatial, infrastructural, institutional, organisational, or procedural**.

Rather than pursuing comprehensive solutions, the lab focuses on **catalytic actions** capable of producing **disproportionate effects** or generating insight. Experiments are framed as **learning devices**, with clear hypotheses, operational intent, and criteria for reflection. This mode embodies **Radical Pragmatism: acting without certainty, but not without care**. Through experimentation, JoburgLAB explores how **volatility, improvisation, and risk** can be engaged productively rather than avoided.



Image: Mark Lewis

6.4. EMBEDDED COLLABORATION AND RISK-SHARING

JoburgLAB works through **embedded collaboration** with partners across civic, institutional, academic, and market domains. Collaboration is structured around **shared inquiry** and **shared exposure**, rather than transactional service provision. Partners participate in shaping questions, testing interventions, and reflecting on outcomes, while **accepting uncertainty** as part of the process.

The lab maintains clear boundaries to protect its independence, ensuring that no single actor or sector captures agenda or conclusions. Risk is acknowledged rather than displaced, and responsibilities are made explicit. This mode allows JoburgLAB to **engage real governance challenges**, investment constraints, and operational realities without becoming instrumentalised. Collaboration is understood as a condition for **learning and consequence, not consensus or alignment at all costs**.

6.5. DOCUMENTATION, LEARNING, AND TRANSLATION

A core function of JoburgLAB is to **retain and translate learning** generated through observation and experimentation. This mode focuses on **documentation, analysis, and reflection** to prevent **institutional amnesia** and **extractive engagement**. Insights are captured through **maps, reports, narratives, diagrams**, and other forms of urban representation.

Learning is translated across domains: into **institutional insight, investment logic, pedagogical material, and public discourse**. Documentation is treated as an **active practice** that shapes how the city is understood and acted upon. By producing **legible, grounded knowledge**, JoburgLAB enables others to engage complexity more responsibly. This mode ensures that experiments generate **cumulative value** rather than isolated outcomes, and that learning remains accessible beyond the immediate context in which it is produced.

6.6. REFLECTION, RECALIBRATION, AND EXIT

JoburgLAB operates with an explicit commitment to **reflection, recalibration, and responsible exit**. Not all experiments should continue, and not all engagements should deepen. This mode establishes criteria for **pausing, adapting, or withdrawing** from work when conditions change, risks escalate, or learning objectives have been met.

Reflection is built into the lab's rhythms, allowing assumptions to be revisited and positions adjusted without defensiveness. Recalibration is understood as rigor, not failure. Exit, when necessary, is undertaken **transparently and with care**, ensuring that responsibilities are not abandoned and that learning is retained. By acknowledging **limits and uncertainty**, this mode protects the lab from overreach and reinforces its ethical commitment to **consequence rather than permanence**.

07 OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

*Short-, medium-, long-term
programmes and experiments*

07 OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

JoburgLAB's activities are organised as recurring and interlinked work streams rather than as a fixed programme. These activities establish a rhythm of observation, inquiry, experimentation, and engagement that allows the lab to respond to emerging conditions while maintaining coherence and accountability. The outline below describes the types of work the lab undertakes, not a prescriptive sequence or timetable.

Activities are designed to remain adaptive, time-bound, and context-sensitive, ensuring that learning accumulates without locking the lab into predetermined outcomes.



7.1. URBAN OBSERVATION CYCLES

JoburgLAB undertakes regular urban **observation cycles** focused on sustained presence, documentation, and close reading of inner-city conditions. These cycles involve **fieldwork, mapping, visual documentation, interviews, and spatial analysis**, conducted over defined periods and revisited over time. Observation cycles allow the lab to track change, identify emerging patterns, and detect points of stress, adaptation, or opportunity.

Rather than producing static reports, observation cycles generate iterative insight that feeds directly into diagnostic framing and experimentation. Where appropriate, these cycles may **align with existing spatial frameworks such as the JICP Walkable Network**, allowing insights to accumulate across a shared and credible geography while remaining open to emergent sites of inquiry beyond it. By returning to sites over time, JoburgLAB builds **longitudinal knowledge** capable of informing more precise and responsible action.

7.2. THEMATIC DEEP DIVES

Alongside ongoing observation, JoburgLAB conducts **thematic deep dives** into specific fields of inquiry. These are focused periods of research and engagement centred on one or two themes at a time, allowing for depth without fragmentation. Deep dives draw together **researchers, practitioners, civic actors, and institutional partners** around shared questions.

Activities may include targeted fieldwork, workshops, studios, roundtables, and analytical production. The aim is not consensus, but **clarity and insight**: surfacing tensions, identifying leverage points, and testing assumptions. Thematic deep dives allow JoburgLAB to move between broad observation and focused inquiry, ensuring that interventions are grounded in robust understanding rather than anecdote or urgency alone.

7.3. EXPERIMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

JoburgLAB initiates experimental interventions to test alternative arrangements in real urban conditions. These interventions are **small-scale, strategic, and time-bound**, designed to explore new approaches to infrastructure, governance, safety, spatial use, or institutional coordination. Experiments are selected for their potential to generate learning rather than for visibility or scale.

Each intervention is framed with a clear learning intent, operational logic, and criteria for reflection. **The Walkable Network offers a credible and extensive spatial field within which experiments can cluster, overlap, and build cumulative effect over time**, without being reduced to a single programme or objective. **Failure is treated as informative rather than disqualifying**, provided it is documented and reflected upon. Through experimentation, the lab explores how risk, improvisation, and uncertainty can be engaged productively and responsibly.

7.4. PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

A key activity of JoburgLAB is **public and institutional engagement** that translates insight into dialogue, reflection, and action. This includes **public conversations, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, studios, and closed institutional forums**, designed to engage diverse audiences without flattening complexity.

Engagements are structured to support **knowledge exchange rather than advocacy**, enabling participants to grapple with difficult questions around governance, investment, and urban futures. For institutional partners, engagements provide spaces to reflect on practice, test ideas, and recalibrate approaches. For wider publics, they **enhance urban legibility** and foster informed debate. These activities ensure that JoburgLAB's work remains connected to lived realities while contributing to broader civic and institutional learning.

A photograph of a city street scene. On the left, there's a sidewalk with a red metal fence and a black traffic light. A person with an umbrella is walking on the sidewalk. In the background, there are tall buildings. On the right, there's a bus stop with a glass shelter and a red building with a sign that says 'Hillbrow Bath House'.

08 OUTPUTS, IMPACT, & PUBLIC VALUE

*Who benefits, how value is
created, and how it's measured*

JoburgLAB's work is oriented toward consequence rather than visibility. Its outputs, impacts, and value are understood as cumulative and relational, emerging through sustained engagement rather than one-off projects. The lab prioritises forms of production that enhance understanding, enable better judgement, and recalibrate how cities like Johannesburg are governed, invested in, and cared for.

Rather than promising scale in advance, JoburgLAB focuses on precision, relevance, and transferability, recognising that durable impact in volatile urban contexts often emerges indirectly and over time.



8.1. OUTPUTS

JoburgLAB produces a range of **public-facing and institutional outputs** that document insight, test ideas, and translate learning across domains. These include **urban dossiers, analytical reports, maps, diagrams, field notes, visual essays, and public conversations**, as well as **experimental spatial or organisational prototypes** where appropriate.

Outputs are treated as **tools for thinking and acting**, not as deliverables for their own sake. They are designed to make complex conditions **legible without oversimplification**, and to support informed engagement by civic actors, institutions, investors, and communities. Academic outputs — including studios, publications, and research projects — operate alongside more accessible forms of knowledge production, ensuring that learning circulates beyond specialist audiences. Collectively, these outputs build a living archive of Johannesburg's inner-city condition and the experiments undertaken within it.

8.2. IMPACT

JoburgLAB understands impact as **directional rather than declarative**. Its work aims to influence how problems are framed, how decisions are made, and how risks and responsibilities are understood across urban systems. Impact may be evident in **shifted institutional practices, new forms of collaboration, reframed investment logic, or more grounded public debate**, rather than in singular outcomes.

By operating upstream of policy, planning, and capital deployment, the lab seeks to shape conditions of possibility rather than control results. Small, well-calibrated interventions can generate learning that informs larger decisions over time. Importantly, impact is assessed reflexively: through review, critique, and recalibration. This approach resists inflated claims and instead prioritises **credibility, accountability, and learning** as measures of meaningful influence.

8.3. VALUE

The value generated by JoburgLAB is multi-dimensional. It is not limited to immediate financial return, but includes institutional, social, operational, and epistemic value. By improving how the city is read and understood, the lab contributes to better judgement under uncertainty, reducing the costs of misaligned action, neglect, or opportunistic extraction.

For institutions and investors, value lies in clearer risk perception, more appropriate intervention strategies, and expanded imaginaries of what is possible and investable in volatile urban contexts. For civic actors and practitioners, value emerges through shared learning, enhanced legibility, and new tools for engagement. JoburgLAB treats value as something to be cultivated over time, through careful work, ethical clarity, and sustained attention to consequence.

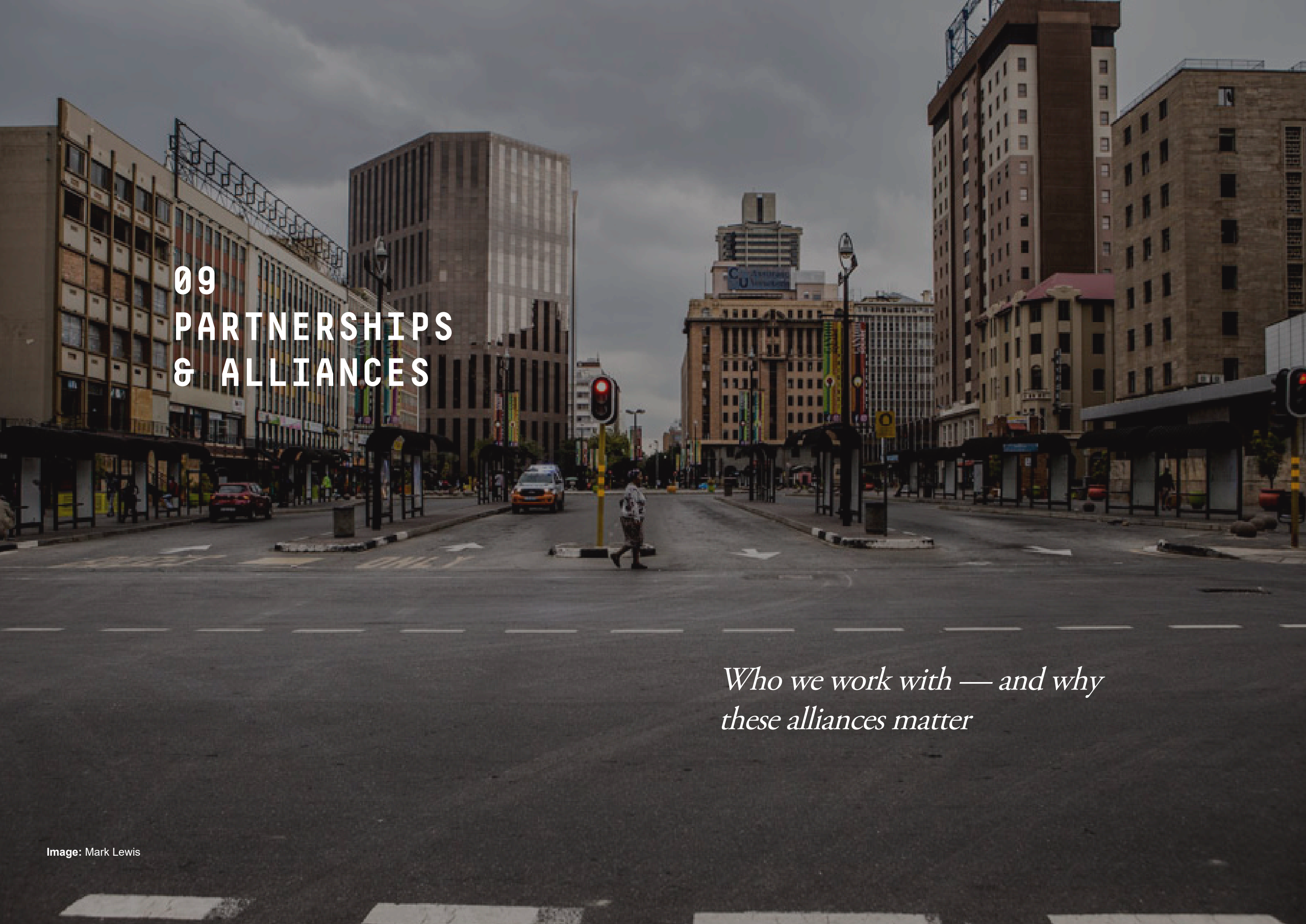
8.4. MEASURING IMPACT AND LEARNING

JoburgLAB approaches impact measurement as a **layered and proportionate practice**, aligned with the complexity of the urban conditions it engages. Impact is assessed across **three complementary levels**: activity, learning, and directional outcomes.

At the first level, the lab tracks **SMART activity indicators** such as observation cycles completed, thematic deep dives initiated, experiments prototyped, projects in the pipeline, and active partnerships. These measures demonstrate discipline, momentum, and operational credibility.

At the second level, impact is assessed through **documented learning and institutional shift**. This includes evidence of reframed problem definitions, adoption of new diagnostic tools, changes in investment or governance practice, and decisions informed by experimentation.

At the third level, the lab tracks **directional urban outcomes** over time — such as stabilisation, increased continuity of use, or reduced operational friction — without over-claiming attribution. Measurement is used in **service of learning, accountability, and recalibration**, rather than compliance alone.



09 PARTNERSHIPS & ALLIANCES

*Who we work with — and why
these alliances matter*

09 PARTNERSHIPS & ALLIANCES

JoburgLAB is built on the premise that no single actor can adequately understand or shape Johannesburg's inner-city condition alone. Partnerships are therefore not instrumental arrangements, but conditions for shared inquiry, risk, and learning. The lab works with a carefully defined ecology of partners across civic, institutional, academic, and market domains, each engaged under clear terms that protect independence and enable consequence.

All alliances are shaped by mutual responsibility, openness to uncertainty, and a commitment to learning rather than control. Partnership within JoburgLAB is not about endorsement or delivery, but about working together in conditions of volatility.



Image: Mark Lewis

9.1. PARTNERSHIP AS SHARED INQUIRY

In JoburgLAB, partnership is understood as shared inquiry rather than service provision. Partners are not clients commissioning outcomes, but participants engaged in framing questions, testing assumptions, and reflecting on results. This mode of partnership requires a willingness to engage complexity without guarantees and to accept uncertainty as intrinsic to meaningful urban work.

Shared inquiry involves joint problem-framing, collective interpretation, and shared exposure to risk, rather than delegated responsibility. Partners contribute perspectives, access, resources, or expertise, while remaining accountable to the integrity of the inquiry. This approach resists extractive collaboration and avoids the instrumentalisation of knowledge. By positioning partnership as a learning relationship, JoburgLAB creates the conditions for trust, credibility, and consequence without collapsing into advocacy or consultancy.

9.2. INSTITUTIONAL AND CIVIC ALLIANCES

JoburgLAB engages with public institutions, civic organisations, and academic partners as critical collaborators in understanding and shaping urban conditions. These alliances recognise that governance challenges cannot be addressed through single-sector responses, and that institutional learning is essential in contexts of structural strain.

Institutional and civic partners engage the lab to reflect on practice, test alternative approaches, and build shared understanding across fragmented systems. Engagements may take the form of joint research, studios, workshops, or embedded experimentation. The lab values partners willing to confront institutional limits honestly and to explore new arrangements without defensiveness. Academic partnerships ground the lab's work in rigorous, practice-based research, while civic alliances ensure ongoing connection to lived realities and everyday urban practice.

9.3. MARKET & CAPITAL ENGAGEMENT

JoburgLAB engages market actors, property owners, investors, insurers, and funders as participants in inquiry rather than as drivers of agenda. Capital is approached as a force already shaping the inner city, and therefore as a necessary interlocutor in conversations about risk, responsibility, and long-term value.

Engagement with market actors is structured to support learning, recalibration, and ethical experimentation, not short-term optimisation. Financial contributors participate as enablers rather than decision-makers, supporting work without directing content or outcomes. Through this approach, the lab seeks to expand how investment potential is understood in volatile urban contexts, aligning financial exposure with more informed, accountable, and productive forms of engagement.

9.4. ROLE OF THE JICP AND THE WALKABLE NETWORK

JoburgLAB is institutionally housed within the Johannesburg Inner City Partnership (JICP), which provides a credible platform for convening, engagement, and experimentation across sectors. The JICP's position at the intersection of public, private, and civic interests enables the lab to engage real urban conditions while retaining critical independence.

The JICP Walkable Network functions as a shared spatial backbone rather than a programme directive. Its extensive geography and institutional legitimacy provide a field within which observation, experimentation, and collaboration can cluster and accumulate over time. Importantly, alignment with the Walkable Network does not determine the lab's agenda; it offers a credible terrain through which multiple inquiries can intersect, layer, and generate cumulative insight.



10 INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP & GOVERNANCE

*Accountability, independence,
and credibility*

10

INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP & GOVERNANCE

JoburgLAB's institutional structure is designed to balance independence with embeddedness, and experimentation with accountability. Governance is treated not as administrative overhead, but as a critical condition that enables the lab to work credibly in volatile urban contexts. The set-up seeks to protect the lab from capture, mission drift, and short-term pressure, while ensuring transparency, ethical clarity, and responsibility to partners and publics.



Image: Mark Lewis

10.1. INSTITUTIONAL POSITIONING

JoburgLAB is institutionally housed within the **Johannesburg Inner City Partnership (JICP)**, providing a stable and credible platform for convening, experimentation, and engagement across sectors. This positioning enables the lab to operate close to real governance challenges, property realities, and operational constraints, without becoming an extension of any single institutional agenda.

The lab's institutional positioning is deliberately hybrid: embedded enough to matter, yet sufficiently independent to maintain critical distance. This balance allows JoburgLAB to engage complexity without being instrumentalised, and to generate insight that is both grounded and uncompromised. Institutional hosting provides legitimacy, continuity, and operational support, while governance safeguards protect the lab's intellectual and ethical autonomy.

10.2. GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

JoburgLAB operates according to a set of governance principles designed to support experimentation while maintaining accountability. These include **independence of inquiry, transparency of intent, shared responsibility for risk, and ethical clarity in engagement**. Governance structures are designed to enable learning rather than control outcomes.

Decision-making within the lab prioritises **judgement over procedure**, allowing flexibility while remaining accountable to agreed principles. Clear boundaries are maintained between funding, partnership, and content generation, preventing undue influence over research directions or conclusions. Governance is reviewed periodically to ensure relevance and robustness as conditions evolve. By foregrounding principles rather than rigid rules, JoburgLAB maintains the agility required for work in unstable urban contexts without sacrificing credibility or trust.

10.3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

Accountability within JoburgLAB is multi-layered and proportionate to the nature of its work. The lab is accountable to its institutional host, funding partners, collaborators, and broader publics through **clear reporting, open documentation, and reflective evaluation**. Oversight mechanisms are designed to ensure responsibility without stifling experimentation.

Rather than relying solely on quantitative metrics, accountability is exercised through **qualitative assessment**, peer review, and periodic reflection on relevance, ethics, and consequence. Failures and limitations are documented as part of learning, not concealed. This approach reinforces trust and enables course correction. By making accountability an active and reflective practice, JoburgLAB ensures that experimentation remains responsible, legible, and aligned with its stated purpose.

10.4. SAFEGUARDS AGAINST CAPTURE

Given the proximity of JoburgLAB's work to power, capital, and contested urban interests, explicit safeguards are required to prevent **institutional capture**. These safeguards include clear separation between **financial contribution and agenda-setting**, transparency in partnership arrangements, and limits on the influence of any single actor or sector.

The lab does not accept commissions that compromise its independence or require predetermined outcomes. Engagements are structured to preserve the lab's ability to critique, recalibrate, and withdraw when necessary. Intellectual authorship remains collective and attributable, rather than proprietary. These safeguards ensure that JoburgLAB remains accountable to its mission and principles, rather than to short-term interests. Independence, in this context, is not neutrality, but a condition for responsible and consequential engagement.

11 FUNDING MODALITIES

*Enablers, not clients; safeguards
against capture*

11 FUNDING MODALITIES

JoburgLAB's funding model is designed to support independence, continuity, and responsible experimentation. Funding is understood as an enabling condition rather than a commissioning mechanism. It creates the capacity to observe carefully, act selectively, and learn cumulatively in volatile urban contexts.

The lab distinguishes between core institutional funding and project-based aligned funding, each serving a different function and governed by clear principles. This layered approach allows JoburgLAB to remain stable without becoming rigid, and experimental without becoming precarious.



Image: Mark Lewis

11.1. FUNDING AS ENABLEMENT, NOT COMMISSION

JoburgLAB approaches funding as **enablement rather than commission**. Financial support is not treated as payment for predetermined outputs, but as an investment in the lab's capacity to undertake careful inquiry, experimentation, and translation over time. This distinction is critical in contexts where premature solutionism and short-term metrics can undermine learning and responsibility.

Funders and contributors engage the lab as **enablers of work**, not as clients directing content, outcomes, or narrative. Funding supports the conditions under which better judgement can be exercised, rather than prescribing results in advance. This approach protects intellectual independence, allows for recalibration as conditions evolve, and ensures that accountability is grounded in learning and consequence rather than compliance alone.

11.2. CORE FUNDING FOR INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY

JoburgLAB seeks **core institutional funding over a three-year horizon** to support its foundational operations and intellectual capacity. This funding underwrites the lab's ability to function as a civic intelligence platform, providing stability across cycles of observation, research, documentation, and engagement.

Core funding supports **basic operations, staffing, research capacity, governance, branding, and public presence**, as well as the infrastructure required to sustain rigorous and ethical work. Importantly, this funding is **not project-specific** and is **not outcome-contingent**. Its purpose is to secure continuity, protect independence, and allow the lab to respond intelligently to emerging conditions. Without this base, experimentation becomes fragmented and opportunistic. With it, JoburgLAB can operate with clarity, consistency, and accountability over time.

11.3. PROJECT-BASED AND ALIGNED FUNDING

Alongside core funding, JoburgLAB engages **project-based funding** aligned with specific inquiries, experiments, or interventions. This funding is time-bound and emerges through **shared interest and exposure** between the lab and its partners. Project funding may be **outcome-contingent**, particularly where projects intersect with investment decisions, operational risk, or spatial development.

Such funding supports experimental interventions, thematic deep dives, or site-specific work, often within credible spatial frameworks such as the **JICP Walkable Network**. **Partners** may derive value from this work — including improved understanding, reduced risk, or enhanced performance — but do not determine agenda or conclusions. Project-based funding enables action without compromising the lab's broader mandate or intellectual independence.

11.4. TRANSPARENCY, CONDITIONS, AND SAFEGUARDS

All funding relationships within JoburgLAB are governed by **clear conditions and safeguards** designed to prevent capture and maintain trust. Funding is accepted only where it aligns with the lab's purpose, governance principles, and commitment to independent inquiry.

The lab does not accept branding-heavy sponsorships or funding arrangements that prioritise visibility, promotion, or predetermined narratives over learning and responsibility. Financial contributions are transparently documented, and boundaries between funding, partnership, and content generation are maintained. Accountability is exercised through reporting, reflection, and review, rather than through narrow performance metrics alone. These safeguards ensure that funding strengthens the lab's work without distorting its intent or compromising its integrity.

12 THE BUSINESS CASE FOR JOBURGLAB



Image: Mark Lewis

12.5 TIERED CORE OPERATIONAL MODEL

JoburgLAB operates through two funding tiers, enabling scalability without dilution of nuance.

Tier 1: Lean Civic Intelligence Platform

Target: ZAR 1.85 million per annum

Personnel (± R890,000)

1. Director (30%) – R330,000
2. Research & Lab Manager (80%) – R300,000
3. Intern (100%) – R180,000
4. Employer contributions – ± R80,000

Operating Structure(± R940,000)

5. Studio & Civic Base Infrastructure – R120,000
6. Digital Presence & Systems – R60,000
7. Convenings & Public Forums – R200,000
8. Travel & Field Engagement – R60,000
9. Core Research Fund – R300,000
10. Graphic Design & Publications – R150,000

11. Contingency – R50,000

Three-Year Commitment: ± R5.55 million

This level positions the LAB as a disciplined, high-precision metropolitan research instrument.

Tier 2: Expanded Research & Influence Model

Target: ZAR 3 million per annum

Tier 2 enables:

- Additional research fellow or thematic specialist
- Expanded data analytics capacity
- Increased convening scale
- Larger pilot experimentation fund
- Stronger publication and dissemination reach

Tier 2 deepens intellectual and experimental capacity while maintaining structural sharpness.

12.6 PROJECT-BASED FINANCIAL MODEL

Core funding sustains institutional continuity
Project funding enables applied experimentation.

Each project operates on:

- Defined scope
- Defined timeline
- Defined performance indicators
- Transparent budget allocation

Project budgets include:

- Direct costs
- Research allocation
- Administrative allocation
- LAB sustainability margin (10–20%)

Project partners co-invest in risk clarification and opportunity generation. Intellectual independence remains protected.

12.7 STRATEGIC FUNDING PATHWAYS

Core Institutional Funders

Philanthropic and research foundations with mandates in urban resilience, governance reform, and civic innovation may serve as anchor sponsors for the three-year establishment phase. Examples include:

- Ford Foundation
- Open Society Foundations
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- DGMT

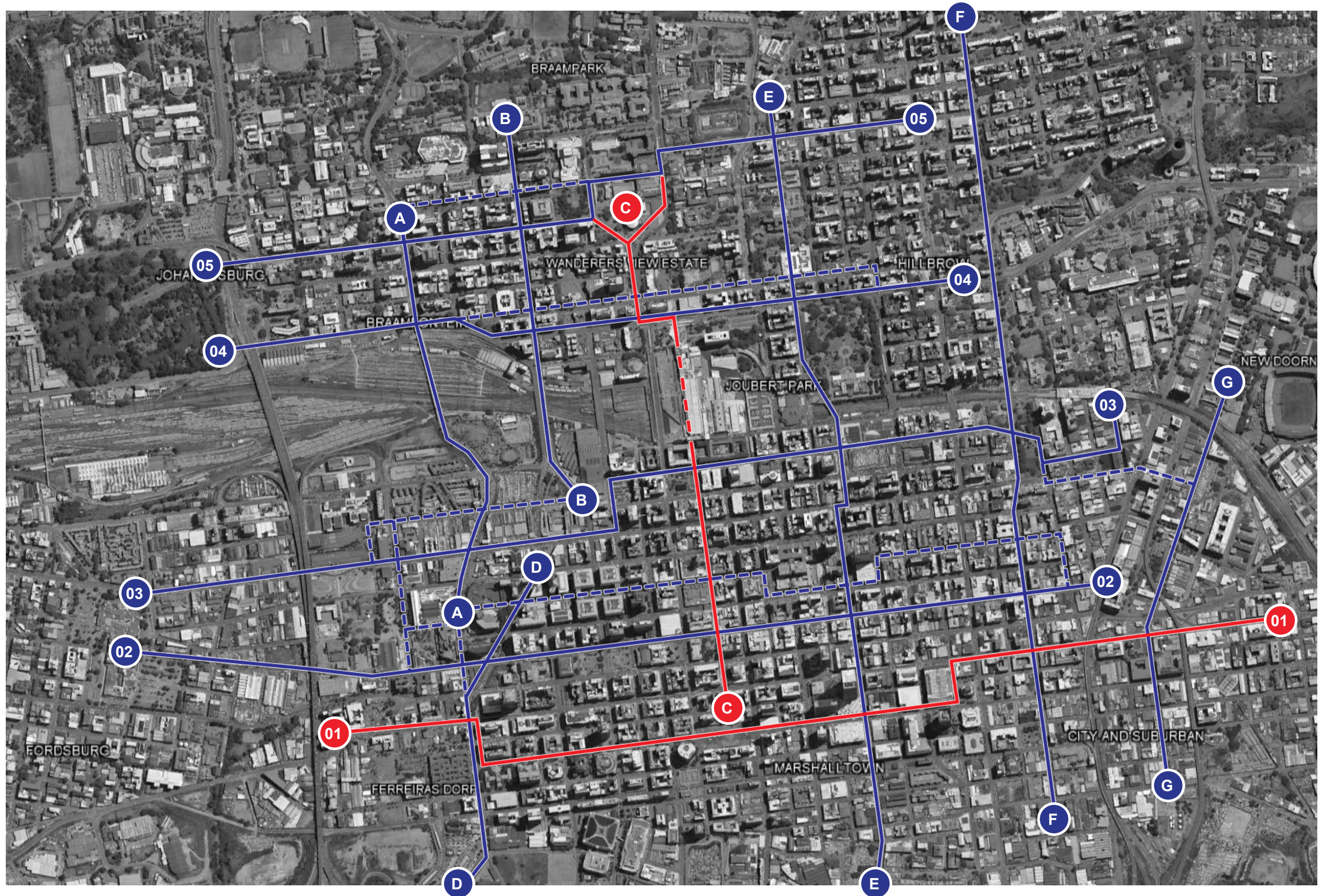
Johannesburg-Based Project Partners

Potential co-investors include:

- Property funds and asset managers
- Commercial banks with mortgage exposure
- Legacy mining houses
- Civic-minded private individuals
- Urban coalitions

In a volatile metropolitan environment, uncertainty carries cost. The LAB reduces uncertainty through calibrated civic intelligence.

That is the economic rationale.



PROSPECTUS

The JoburgLAB_

A Laboratory for Radical Pragmatism and Institutional Experimentation in Johannesburg

A counter-intuitive and rigorously informed initiative
to read and operate with more cunning and boldness
within the inner-city of Johannesburg

an initiative of
Johannesburg Inner City Partnership

led by
Thireshen Govender

& supported by
Graduate School of Architecture (TBC)
(University of Johannesburg)