



## THE JICP CHAIRPERSON'S OVERVIEW

In the year under review The Johannesburg Inner City Partnership continued to expand, strengthen and deepen its relationship with the City, private sector, other stakeholders as well as its primary sponsors and donors. Members of the board were always ready and prepared, beyond the call of duty, to give their support to worthy causes. They worked amazingly well in collaboration with the community, government and the private sectors. In the process inspired people were identified, collaborated with and supported, when necessary, in the conceptualisation and execution of work plans. This involved the leadership hierarchy at all group levels and in terms of their pecking order.

Much effort was also directed at bringing City and Provincial leaders closer together in order to cement our local social compact. We remained motivated and focused on our shared common purpose. Our relentless zeal for the inner city's rejuvenation and vitalization was palpable. All that was intended for the individual and collective interests of all stakeholders. We have had numerous opportunities to come together with primary and CEO-level leaders of government, community, and business. Property owners and managers in the city have often led the charge. The then Executive Mayor Mashaba and members of the Mayoral Committees, City Manager Ndivhoniswani Lukhwareni and many municipal officials reciprocated. Business and community builders based in the inner city also played their part and ensured that agreed partnership projects are recognized and sustained.

A number of important events and developments have conspired together to raise awareness among all that partnerships should be at the core of their business and strategic imperatives. We found it right to remind ourselves that we are all without exception called upon to actively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the National Development Plan and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 17, Partnership for the Cities, is relevant to us and it is meant to ensure that the rest of the agreed global goals are achieved by 2030.

We noted with appreciation the importance of the Inner City Think Tank. Meetings were convened to engage key leaders in strategic conversations. One-on-one meetings in parallel served to build public relationships and align leaders' interests and their institutional purpose. One of the year's impressive highlights was the executives' breakfast hosted by Anglo American Corporation. This event provided those involved with a platform to meet and greet each other, reflect on developments, and many endorsed and expressed their commitment to the JICP. Another first in recent time was a two-day international conference that brought together city improvement enthusiasts and practitioners from far and near. These were also joined by government representatives and business partners.

The Inner City Partnership Forum was regularly co-convened by the JICP and the City. The intentions were to publicly announce agreements between the City and JICP and to showcase work in progress that was promoted by stakeholders, namely, the City, business, and community organisations. The broadly representative forum confirmed my observation that unrecognized myriads initiatives co-exist in the city. Some of these require our support and their contribution to society appreciated.

Early in the year I enjoyed being a member of the team that adjudicated My City My Block proposals at the Johannesburg Development Agency. They too renewed my faith in the human spirit and initiative even under extremely testing circumstances. Together, in different spaces, we took note and discussed various contributions to the Inner City Transformation Roadmap. City departments and entities, on the one hand, and the private sector, on the other, continuously alternated in making their presentations at the gatherings. Safety and security (The City, SAPS and the private-sector initiated The FIRM), capex for Region F, cleanliness and grime (Pikitup/CIDs), inner city parks, homelessness and related issues, heritage buildings register, bespoke property refurbishments, and governance were, among others, some of the subjects presented for consideration. Naturally networking happened, match-making and partnerships were explored or forged, solutions to development obstacles agreed while commitment and support for initiatives and projects were the outcomes.

Representatives of City Improvement Districts continued to meet on monthly basis. The CIDs Forum was managed, led and convened by Anne Steffny. Members, representing local development areas spread beyond the inner city limits, continued to offer mutual support to one another, learned and shared experiences, and adopted common approaches and strategies, where appropriate, to finding solutions to persistent problems. The CIDs Forum continues to draw closer public and private role players for deliberations and mutual support.

The Inner-City Urban Renewal Stakeholder Engagement in the City of Johannesburg took place on 20 October, 2019 convened by the Minister for Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Hon L.N. Sisulu, together with Joshco, the City, Gauteng Provincial Government, National Housing Finance Corporation, JHC, and HAD, among others. Rory Gallocher of SHRA gave an exhaustive presentation to delegates. This rare event brought together the private sector as well as all spheres of government to focus on housing-driven urban regeneration. We should build on its foundations if we were to succeed where many have previously fallen flat.

It was heartening for me that intentional outreach and conversations with the religious sector in the inner city were started. This was in line with our inclusive programme. The sector could help foster more empathetic and inclusive social and economic growth, civic responsibility and social cohesion among us. Leaders of our main congregations share our commitment, vision and common interest for the city and people. We have community-based partners in them. They are custodians of our positive values. We rely on them. Johannesburg needs us to play active decisive roles in its development. We can mend the damaged social and moral fabric of society. We can contribute build accountable ethical public figures. The Partnership can shape social and economic leaders suited to respect and promote our cherished shared values that are enshrined in the Constitution.

When required, critical support for the work of City officials was canvassed and provided. Obvious capacity shortcomings often presented opportunities and challenges. Work involving informal and often marginalized groups is certainly a new frontier for exploration. We must work with them. They constitute the inner-city social and economic ecosystem but they are poorly served. They primarily rely on dedicated services provided by insufficiently human and materially resourced civil society, religious congregations and volunteers. Needed is to actively listen to the informal sector, enhance our understanding, and appropriately relate to it while providing proper support or services.

A programmatic rather than relief or palliative development approach is advisable and must be adopted. How can we re-imagine and redirect available social and economic investments in order to effectively bring about change for the better? It is possible to address the lot and legitimate interests of the disadvantaged sector. Justice expresses itself in daily taking action to remove the eyesore that is manifested by the increasing numbers of local urban areas and hurting families that are being trampled to the ground and left behind. We have to accept and share more responsibilities and find sustainable solutions, respond and contribute to the wellbeing of all. The alternative will be to reap poisonous fruits from deadly fields that breed grime, distrust, chaos, violence, and crime.

We had not expected that 2020 was to turn out in this fashion. Extraordinary times have exacerbated our intractable and wicked problems. We have been aware of but now agreed that we need to implement sustainable solutions. The silver lining is that it is now crystal clear to many rational minds that we need to work together or perish in our isolated social and economic islands. We collaborate even more now than we have ever been, maximizing our knowledge, skills, resources, and effort. Meanwhile JICP has become more mindful of its limited capacity and resources.

We have not shunned, however, to recruit and retain our critical executive staff and to build a strong inclusive board, and renew JICP's mission and strategies. We have raised our standard of compliance and governance requirement. Our communication lines remain open so that many voices can be heard and both information and learning shared. Working with partners we brought to satisfactory conclusion a number of projects, sustained and grew others while committing ourselves to incubate new ones. These projects will serve as catalysts for further beneficial change. The task to make the inner city clean, safe and welcoming require of us exceptional commitment from all of us.

In order to prevail over the mutating wicked and intractable problems we need a strong board and suitable executive support constituted of knowledgeable, skilled and passionate people as well as adequate resources. We are very happy to have David van Niekerk as CEO. He is truly all of these things and brings a wealth private and public sectors experience to underpin his work. Thanks to Mpolai Nkopane and Anthea Hendrikz for holding the fort before David's arrival. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to Michelle Beukes for financial management as well as governance support and secretarial services. Kate Engelbrecht remains our reliable communication and networking pillar of strength. We thank her and fully appreciate her work.

I would like to sincerely thank members of the board for your sterling service to the city of Johannesburg, residents, business, artists, tourists and others that have sought and found spaces within which they happily socialise. Thanks for your matchless commitment and passion. You have and continued to make a considerable contribution in time, effort, skills, resources, and networks.

Further, it is an impossible task to thank all our City officials for their collegiate and professional relationships. Thank you Thabo Maisela and Krishni Gouden. The partnership persists and endures because of your integrity and commitment. Political will displayed by successive the City Executive Mayors is invaluable and we are appreciative for your strategic foresighted leadership.

Finally, I would like to thank our dependable sponsors, donors and those who made their in-kind contributions to The Johannesburg Inner-City Partnership. Our immediate tasks remain daunting and complex require your valuable expertise as well as financial and strategic leadership support in the spirit of genuine solidarity for South Africa, people's lives and livelihoods.

Onwards, Phambili and Vorentoe! Thank you all, friends and compatriots.

Ishmael Mkhabela

Chairperson

31 July, 2020