INNER CITY MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Reading and Re-writing, Johannesburg Inner City, 2011

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The exhibition explores informality as an interactive process and views projects as generators for new approaches and ways of engaging with it. It is essential to explore and unpack the techniques and methodologies that make urban design a more relevant practice, in order to unleash the potential benefits of urbanity, which are most visible through positive communal meaning and experience in the public environment - public spaces. Urban design processes include understanding context, mapping activities, and participatory engagement, acknowledging constraints, realizing opportunities, exploring alternatives, negotiation and deal making. Urban design as a process becomes a tool for decision-making, mediating between the interests of the individual and the responsibilities of the city.

Urban design translates processes and ideas into spatial interventions that facilitate traditional practices, current livelihoods and future growth. Every city has a unique and
personal language of its own, and thus every intervention or design intended for the city, must be unique too.

The framework presented is based on the principles of building new relationships between the many multi-functional spaces present, bridging the gaps, connecting and providing a sustainable and appropriate base on which the city can grow and improve on. It is supportive of the everyday and the celebratory, but is flexible enough to enable the future. Streets are a critical component of the public space. Their design, conditions and character play major roles in defining the image of the city: affecting its vitality, the health of the inhabitants, quality of life, safety and economic welfare. The access network provides the critical framework for current and future development and growth.

The intention is to "reclaim the street" and put the pedestrian back at the centre, and design and manage the inner-city as a "walkable" and inclusive environment.

Networks and connections are the key interventions. Linking spaces through pedestrian friendly networks, public/communal spaces, public transport facilities and the overall betterment and upgrading of the city environment, gives way for new opportunities for the public.

With minimal interventions, using innovative tactics and strategies, the multi-layered and multi-functional spaces of the city can be explored in ways in which would allow for economic growth and opportunities, functional public interfaces, pedestrian connections and networking.

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