

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE STUDY AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The promotion of private sector investment is an integral part of the City of Johannesburg's urban regeneration strategy. Since the mid-1980s the City of Johannesburg introduced and pursued policies that sought to influence market conditions so as to stimulate private sector investment. The urban regeneration strategy document itself spells out clearly this desire to stimulate the market in that it seeks to 'raise and sustain private investment leading to a steady rise in property values' (CoJ, 2004a, p. 11).

This predilection towards stimulating private sector investment is also reflected in various policy trajectories and a raft of initiatives¹ that have been introduced or embraced by the City of Johannesburg. For instance, the City of Johannesburg, together with the Gauteng provincial government, has implemented a number of high-profile capital investment or precinct upgrading projects to prepare the investment landscape and promote certain locations as "good investment zones". The underlying assumption has been that these projects have the ability to act as catalysts for inner city revival and stimulate private investment (JDA, 2005).

The concept of City Improvement District (CIDs)² was introduced in 1998 in various parts of the inner city to supplement various urban management services of the City of Johannesburg such as cleaning, maintenance and public security (Engelbricht, 2004; Vetten and Dladla, 2000; GPG, 1998). Again, the underlying assumption is that well-kept areas are likely to appeal to the private investor

¹ These measures are discussed in detail in chapter 5. Due to the amount of information and detail that constitute these measures, it is best to discuss them in a separate chapter.

² CIDs are also known as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or special services districts or special assessment district (Heimann, 2007; Hoyt, 2004). As will be explained in chapter 3, CIDs are given many other names in various countries. The commonly used term locally is City Improvement Districts (CIDs). Similarly this study will make use of the latter term.



(Heimann, 2007). An urban regeneration agency - the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) – was established in 2001 to manage government funded regeneration projects and facilitate investment in inner city locations. The Better Building Programme (BBP) was introduced through which the City of Johannesburg identified derelict buildings and expropriated them for sale to private property developers.

More recently, the Urban Development Zone (UDZ) tax incentive was introduced to attract private sector investment in the inner city. Although introduced by the national government, the UDZ initiative has since become an integral part of the urban regeneration strategy in Johannesburg (CoJ, 2004a). Finally, a variety of crime prevention measures have been implemented to stem the effects of crime on private investment. In terms of this urban regeneration strategy, municipal officials are encouraged to forge effective partnerships with the private sector so as to ensure the efficient delivery of urban regeneration programmes (Bremner, 2000).

It is believed that the above initiatives have the ability to combat supply-side deterrents to private sector investments and aid in eliciting the much needed private capital necessary to bolster urban regeneration process. It is also believed that they have other benefits such as positive influence on the [property] market and local economy; improve property yields and values; spur better consumption of space; and improve occupancy levels³. Private sector investment is encouraged as it will ultimately be beneficial to the government in the sense that private sector investment and capital injection will accelerate the urban regeneration inertia and increase revenue base for the city in the form of municipal services, which can be utilized for other expenditure priorities. The various initiatives that have been introduced in Johannesburg under the

 $^{^3}$ These measures are in fact some of the key performance indicators used by the urban regeneration agency – the JDA – to measure the impact and success of urban regeneration projects in areas where it has implemented them (JDA, 2005).



framework of urban regeneration, the changes in landscape and urban form were found to be intriguing and in turn motivated the undertaking of this research.

1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

While the current strategy and policy direction are clear about encouraging the flow of private sector investment in the Johannesburg Inner City (Lipietz, 2004; CoJ, 2004a; Beall *et al*, 2002; Bremner, 2000), little is known about the private sector perception and its attitude towards urban regeneration and how it has responded to a variety of initiatives aimed at attracting investment in the inner city. Policies are often developed on a hunch and presumably to stimulate private sector investment but with limited understanding of the private sector perspective of the inner city. While the current urban regeneration initiatives have been generally welcomed by the private sector, through its ardent and continued participation in the inner city (Fraser, 2005a; JDA, 2005; Trafalgar Report, 2005), little is also known about factors that motivate the private sector to invest in the Johannesburg Inner City or those that hinder the flow of private sector finance into the area. No study has been undertaken or commissioned in this regard.

This study therefore seeks to explore and distil the private sector perspection of urban regeneration initiatives in the Johannesburg Inner City. Broadly defined the study focuses on the following research question: How does the private sector perceives the urban regeneration initiatives and has it responded to instruments designed to attract its investment in the Johannesburg Inner City. This research problem is further explored by focusing on the following sub-problems:

1.2.1 <u>Sub-problems</u>

- 1. What are the factors that motivate private sector investment in the Johannesburg Inner City?
- 2. What factors hinder the flow of private sector finance in the inner city?



- 3. How does the private sector perceive the government precinct upgrading projects in facilitating its investment in the inner city?
- 4. How does the private sector perceive the Urban Development Zones (UDZ) concept and its effectiveness in enticing private sector investment in the inner city?
- 5. How does the private sector view the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) as the facilitator of urban regeneration and private investment?
- 6. What perceptions are held by the private sector about the Better Building Programme (BBP)?
- 7. What is the private sector's perception of City Improvement Districts (CIDs) in facilitating private sector investment?
- 8. What is the private sector's perception of crime and the effectiveness of crime prevention measures?

The study seeks to explore the broader scope of incentives used in the Johannesburg Inner City, questioning whether these incentives are effective or not, from a private sector perspective.

1.3 <u>TYPE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH</u>

This study is, in the main, an **empirical study (qualitative)**. There are of course different kinds of empirical studies (Mouton, 2005). In terms of the different tenets of empirical studies, this study is an example of **evaluation research**, that is, it evaluates a particular phenomenon as is (i.e. the private sector perception of urban regeneration initiatives and measures designed to attract private investment in the inner city). Mouton (2005) describes such research as 'qualitative (or naturalistic) evaluation approaches [that] involve the use of predominantly qualitative research methods to describe and evaluate the performance of programmes in their natural settings, focusing on the process of implementation rather than on (quantifiable) outcomes' (p. 161).

Mouton further states that these studies 'are also preferred designs when working with developing communities where participation by the participants in



the evaluation is desirable' (Mouton, 2005, p. 162). This applies to this study as the views of major participants in the urban regeneration process will be used to evaluate the perceived efficiencies and inefficiencies of various urban regeneration initiatives in the Johannesburg Inner City area. The researcher is aware of the limitations of evaluation studies. For instance, Mouton (2005) argues that it is difficult to evaluate programme outcomes systematically and rigorously using this approach, resulting in difficulties in making causal inferences regarding programme benefits and impacts.

However, this shortcoming will not affect this study as it is not primarily concerned with proving the "cause-effect" principle. Rather, it evaluates, from the private sector perspective, the urban regeneration initiatives against their original objectives and perceived outcomes. In other words it explores the perception and not the reasons why the private sector perceives the inner city in a certain way.

The study also "borrows" tenets of a **descriptive research or "case study**". This is an empirical enquiry whose aim is to examine individual instances, or cases, of phenomenon (McBurney, 2001). The principal characteristic of a case study or descriptive research is that it is research in which a specific situation is studied either to see if it gives rise to any general theories, or to see if existing general theories are borne out by the specific situation (Goddard and Melville, 2005). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) further state that 'this type of research involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring possible correlation among two or more phenomena. In every case, descriptive research examines a situation as it is' (p. 179). Similarly, this study will make certain observations from the research data, draw correlations and arrive at appropriate conclusions without seeking to pass a verdict, question the validity of current paradigm of urban regeneration or to explore the "cause-effect" principle.



1.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance and the relevance of this study relate, firstly, to the growing need to transform and revive the declining parts of the Johannesburg Inner City. The study provides a scholarly account and the private sector perspective of inner city regeneration thus contributing to academic knowledge and the understanding of the process of urban regeneration. It also offers significant insight, based on the private sector perspective, of aspects that have worked effectively in the urban regeneration process, those that have not and suggests areas of improvement to the benefit of the urban regeneration process.

Secondly, the importance of the study can be understood in relation to the role that private sector and investment can play in reviving the fortunes of declining inner city areas and reversing the wave of urban decline. By identifying areas of achievement, challenges and interventions perceived as necessary, the study contributes towards efforts aimed at improving the process of urban regeneration and enhancing the prospects of private sector investment in the inner city. Failure to understand private sector perspective can potentially culminate in the development and implementation of inappropriate interventions.

Even from a private investor perspective, the study provides a detailed account and noteworthy aspects (i.e. risks and opportunities; strengths and weaknesses; efficiencies and inefficiencies) about the Johannesburg Inner City as a potential investment area and business location. Through the sets of findings, the study provides an invaluable insight about the Johannesburg Inner City and highlights pertinent market factors that can be considered by prospective investors prior to embarking on major investments projects. For instance, it analyses prevailing market conditions in the inner city, identifies areas perceived as suitable investment areas and identifies some of the underlying risks in the inner city environment which are essential to investors.



1.4.1 Contribution and value of the study

There is presently a tremendous amount of interest (from academics as well as the public and private sector actors) in renewing declining inner city areas in South Africa⁴ in general and Johannesburg in particular (Fraser, 2005a; Chipkins, 2005; Bremner, 2000). The Johannesburg Inner City in general and urban regeneration initiatives in particular have received a significant amount of academic attention (Chipkins, 2005; Beall et al, 2002; Bremner, 2000). However, the study of library catalogues and internet searches revealed that no study yet has been done (singularly or collectively), on the private sector perception of the Johannesburg Inner City and urban regeneration initiatives, its attitude towards regeneration programme, the problems it experiences and possible solutions it perceives. Although there are numerous international publications in the field of financing urban regeneration (e.g. the work of Adair et al, 2003; 2000; 1999; Ball et al: 2003; McGreal et al, 2002; 2000) which compare well with this study, no similar study has been undertaken locally. This study therefore makes an original contribution to the body of knowledge particularly on urban regeneration and private sector investment.

The international studies mentioned above will form part of the literature review and serve as references to this study. Their findings will also be compared with those made by this study to identify similarities and differences. While these studies will be acknowledged and extensively referred to, this study remains an original investigation, thus making an original contribution to academic knowledge and literature, locally and internationally. While these studies bear similarities to this study in that they sought to understand the private sector perception of urban regeneration, the contexts and the frameworks for evaluation employed in this study is different from the international studies quoted above. For instance, the studies mentioned above did not specifically investigate the efficiency of specific measures designed to stimulate private sector investment

⁴ Major cities in South Africa such as Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria have all embarked on ambitious urban regeneration plans. However, Johannesburg has had a longer and more extensive experience in this regard.



such as CIDs, UDZ, BBP and crime prevention measures etc. as done in this study. *Secondly*, there are contextual differences which may lead this study to new discoveries.

While this study remains empirical in nature it also intends making a contribution to the theoretical debates in the field of urban regeneration. By secondary intent, it assesses the plausibility of various theoretical constructs (such as the competitive cities approach, New Urbanism, Regime Theory etc.) underpinning the urban regeneration strategy in Johannesburg. The study will therefore use the empirical findings on Johannesburg Inner City to give clues about possible theoretical debates that can be made on the basis of the research findings.

1.5 NARROWING THE MARGINS: THE SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The study focuses mainly on the private sector perspective of urban regeneration in the Johannesburg Inner City. For the purpose of this study, the private sector depicts privately owned entities that have shown or are showing interest in the inner city and urban regeneration through property development and investments, space ownership, building management, providing various property services, research work and consultancy services. Typically, these include property developers and investors, property managers, property agents and brokers, financial institutions, consultants and researchers. The scope of the study revolves around certain **parameters**. *Firstly* the study analyzes private sector's perception of the inner city after the introduction of urban regeneration interventions to determine how such interventions are perceived. This will enable the researcher to draw certain conclusions about the process of urban regeneration in Johannesburg.

Secondly, it explores factors that have served to motivate private sector investment in the inner city as well as those that have acted as hindrances to same. This will enable the researcher to contrast such factors with urban



regeneration initiatives and to draw appropriate conclusions about the efficiency of the urban regeneration initiatives in attracting private sector investment. *Thirdly*, the study explores perceptions held by the private sector about five (5) policy instruments that have been introduced by the City of Johannesburg (including those introduced by national and provincial governments) to stimulate private sector investment thereby facilitating urban regeneration. These are: the Urban Development Zone (UDZ), the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), the Better Building Programme (BBP), the City Improvement Districts (CIDs) and the crime prevention measures (i.e. CCTV cameras, CIDs, Policing etc.).

The discussion about how data was gathered in respect of the above instruments is carried forward in Chapter 2 of this thesis which focuses on research methodology. The discussion on research methodology is done as a separate chapter due to the intricate nature of the method used in gathering data in this study. In exploring the private sector perception of urban regeneration and policy instruments designed to attract investment in the Johannesburg Inner City, the study does not seek to pass a verdict or make recommendations on the urban regeneration front. It was considered difficult to make recommendations on the basis of data collected in this study. The study does however articulate sentiments held by the private sector about the interventions perceived necessary to improve urban regeneration programme.

1.6 ABOUT THE STUDY AREA

The area on which the study focuses, hereinafter referred to as "the study area", is the Johannesburg Inner City which is part of the greater Johannesburg metropolitan area (see Map 1). It forms part of region F⁵ and covers an area of about 18 square kilometres (CoJ, 2004a) or 1760 hectares (CoJ, 2004b). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, it is an area where the original mining camps of the "City of Gold", as Johannesburg is also known, were established in the late 19th

⁵ The greated Johannesburg metropolitan are consists of eleven (11) administrative regions, of which the inner city is located in region F. The inner city is also known as the Johannesburg Central Region.



century, making it the heartland of where the greater Johannesburg started. The inner city is bounded in the north by Louis Botha Ave in Yeoville side, Empire road in Braamfontein, M2 highway to the west and various small roads to the east and south.

The inner city is characterised by the combination of commercial, retail, and residential uses. The area can also be divided into five primary segments: the commercial core (City Centre or Central Business District - CBD); the office satellite centre of Braamfontein; the lower density residential suburbs to the east of the City Centre of Yeoville, Bertrams, Troyeville and Jeppestown; the higher density residential areas of Berea and Hillbrow; City Deep; and with Newtown, Fordsburg, Pageview and Vrededorp to the west. The extent of the Johannesburg Inner City and location of various land-uses is shown on Maps 1, 2, 3 and 4. The inner city boundaries also coincide with the Urban Development Zone (UDZ) delineation (*ibid*). The inner city itself has also been subdivided in precincts which are discussed in chapter 5 (paragraph 5.6.5) and illustrated in Map 5.

In 2006 the inner city resident population was estimated at more that 200 000 people (www.joburg.gov.za; www.joburgcentral.co.za), of which 75% also worked in the area (Trafalgar Report, 2006). In 2002 about 800 000 commuters were reportedly entering the inner city everyday, thus accounting for more one quarter of the entire city's population⁶ (Beall *et al*, 2002). In addition to this, half a million people from other African countries come to the inner city each year for cross-border shopping (www.joburg.gov.za). The area is characterised by disparities between the rich and the poor. While the inner city houses an array of economic activities and is regarded as the centre of wealth creation, unemployment in the area is high, estimated at 29% with some 18% of households earning less than R500 per month (www.joburg.gov.za).

⁶ In terms of State of Cities Report 2006, the City of Johannesburg (i.e. the wider metropolitan area) had a population of about 2.9 million people in 2006 (SOC Report, 2006). The number was estimated to be 3 million in 2007 (Mabin, 2007).



The inner city experienced urban decline which commenced in the late 1980s. For instance between 1991 and 1996 and employment declined by 4.9% percent per annum with most shrinkage being in the manufacturing sector (Tomlinson *et al*, 2003b). Similarly most businesses left the city during this time to suburban locations. Extensive discussion on the extent of economic decline in the inner city will take place in chapter 5 of this thesis. Suffice to say that it is against this background of urban decline and business flight that urban regeneration has been framed with the underlying intention to restore private sector investment in the inner city.

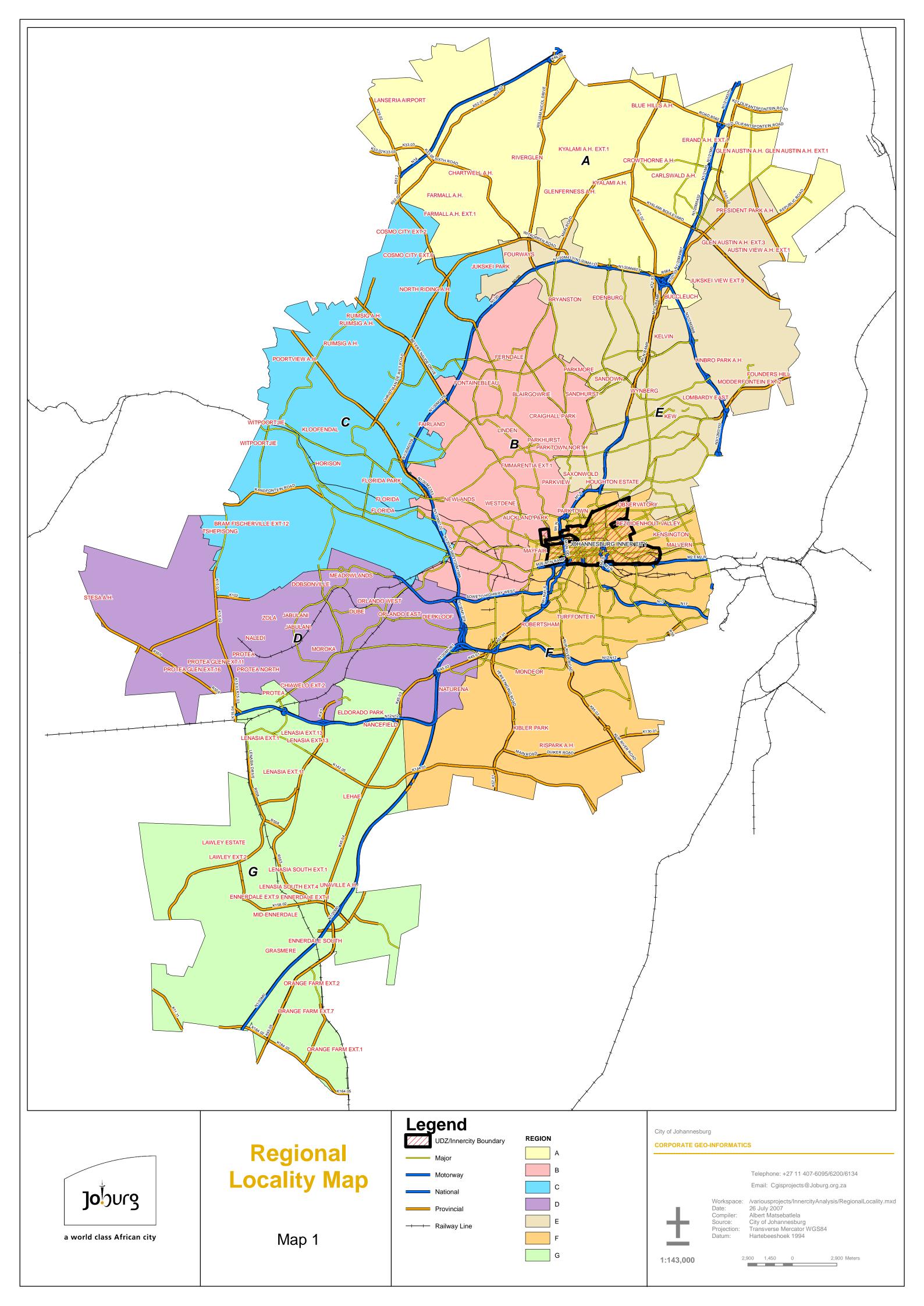
1.6.1 <u>Reasons for selecting the Johannesburg Inner City as the study area</u>

The City of Johannesburg is renowned for implementing the most extensive urban regeneration programme when compared to any other South African city. It is thus regarded as relatively "more advanced" in this regard (Frazer, 2005; Bremner, 2000) and 'for many in South Africa, Johannesburg is the test case of urban reconstruction' (Beall *et al*, 2002, p. 7). While other South African municipalities such eThekwini (in Durban), Cape Town and Tshwane (in Pretoria) have made noticeable strides at rejuvenating their inner city areas, their efforts have not been at the scale seen in Johannesburg and thus did not provide grounds for a comprehensive study.

Owing to the fact that urban regeneration is by nature a long-term intervention (Adair *et al*, 1999; Couch, 1990) whose results usually take long to realize, Johannesburg, by virtue of having extensive experience on urban regeneration issues, provided in many ways an ideal location to undertake an analysis of the emerging outcomes of urban regeneration process or where the results of the process could be measured against original objectives. In fact some key aspects that the study intended to investigate such as the regeneration agencies, precinct upgrading projects which have been implemented in Johannesburg Inner City had not been implemented in cities such as Durban and Pretoria, thus making Johannesburg an ideal area for investigation.

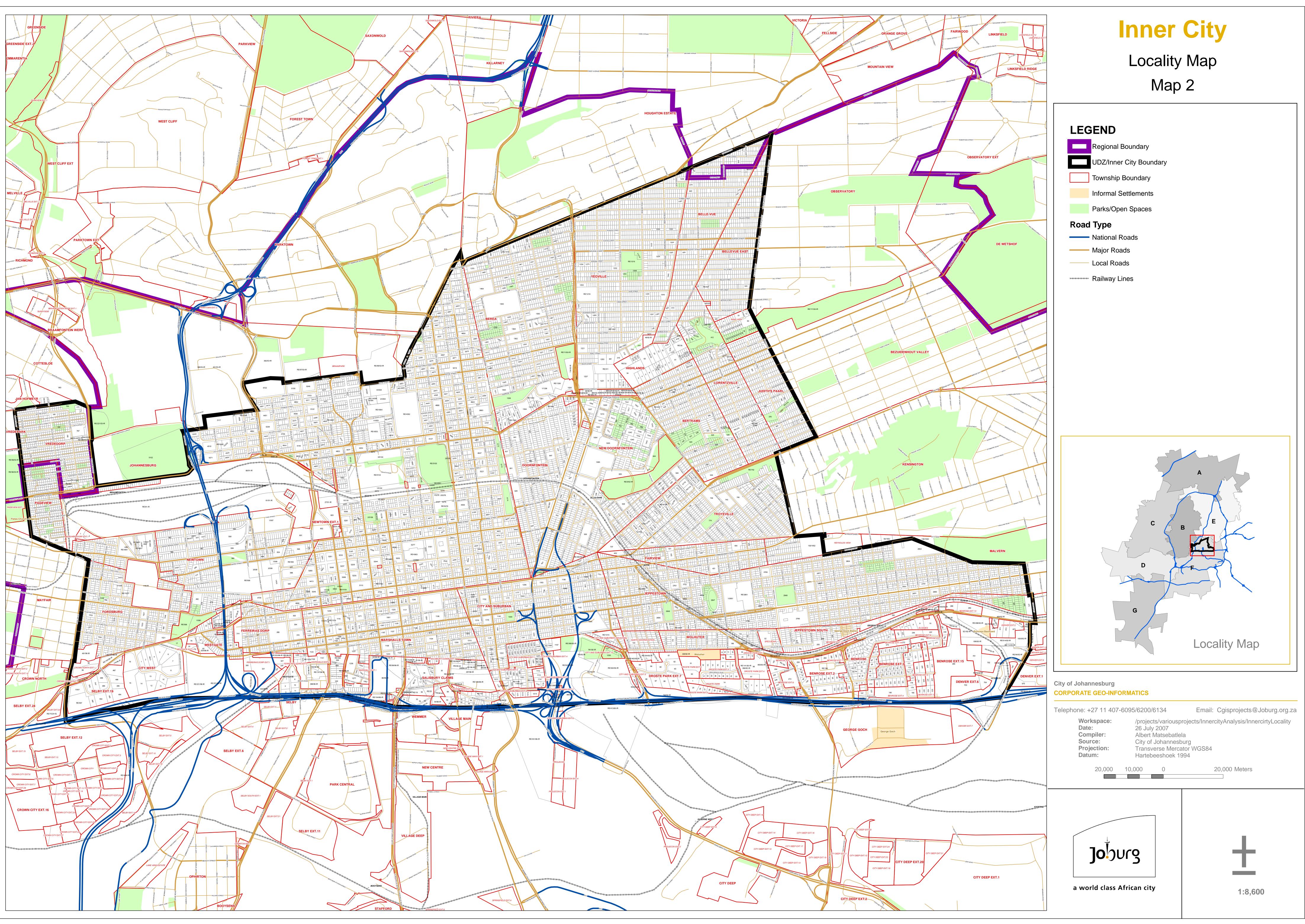


Map 1: Regional Locality Plan





Map 2: Inner City Locality Plan





Johannesburg is also the commercial hub of the South African economy, boasting the largest property market in the country (JHI Report, 2003). Since the study was mainly concerned with the private sector's views of urban regeneration, Johannesburg's suitability was also strengthened by the fact that a large number of major companies have presumably been involved in the area more than in any other South African city.

1.7 URBAN REGENERATION: TOWARDS A DEFINITIONAL DISCOURSE

The following terms are defined which will be used in various parts of this thesis:

1.7.1 Urban Renewal

The term "urban renewal" has it origins in the US literature (Couch, 1990; Barnekov *et al*, 1989) and depicts '*the process of redeveloping or rehabilitating of older parts of towns and cities including their central business districts and economic infrastructure*' (Gibson and Langstaff 1982, p.44). Couch (1990) defines it as '*a physical, or change in the use or change in the intensity of use of land and buildings which is the direct outcome of action of economic and social forces*' (p.12).

1.7.2 Urban regeneration

There is not a standard definition of the term urban regeneration. Adair *et al* (2003) defines it as *'the process of reversing economic, social and physical decay in towns and cities where it has reached that stage when market forces alone will not suffice* (p. 374). Elsewhere it is defined as *'an idea that encapsulates both the perception of city decline (in local economies, in the use of land and buildings, in the quality of the environment and social life) and hope of renewal, reversing trends in order to find new basis for economic growth and social well-being' (McCarthy and Pollock, 1997, p.137 and Healey <i>et al*, 1992a, p.3). In this study urban regeneration is viewed as encapsulating more than just physical urban change or rejuvenation of built environment but includes broader



revival of the inner city economy, people and enterprises. Another term closely related to urban regeneration is "urban renewal".

The above two terms are often used interchangeably. The difference lies in their area of origin. Whereas the former is often associated with the US context and literature and is essentially about urban physical change (i.e. redevelopment, demolition and rebuilding etc.), the latter is derived from UK literature and generally is about seeking means to improve economic performance of locations, bring back investments, create employment and consumption of goods and to enhance the quality of life in urban areas (Couch 1990; Barnekov *et al*, 1989; Squires, 1997). It should also be acknowledged that the concept of urban regeneration in both the US and UK also encompasses another focus - that is, in particular neighbourhoods/estates with high concentrations of social houses and not just cities and suburbs.

1.7.3 <u>Urban redevelopment</u>

The term urban redevelopment depicts a process of demolishing a building or buildings completely and erecting new ones (Barnekov *et al*, 1989).

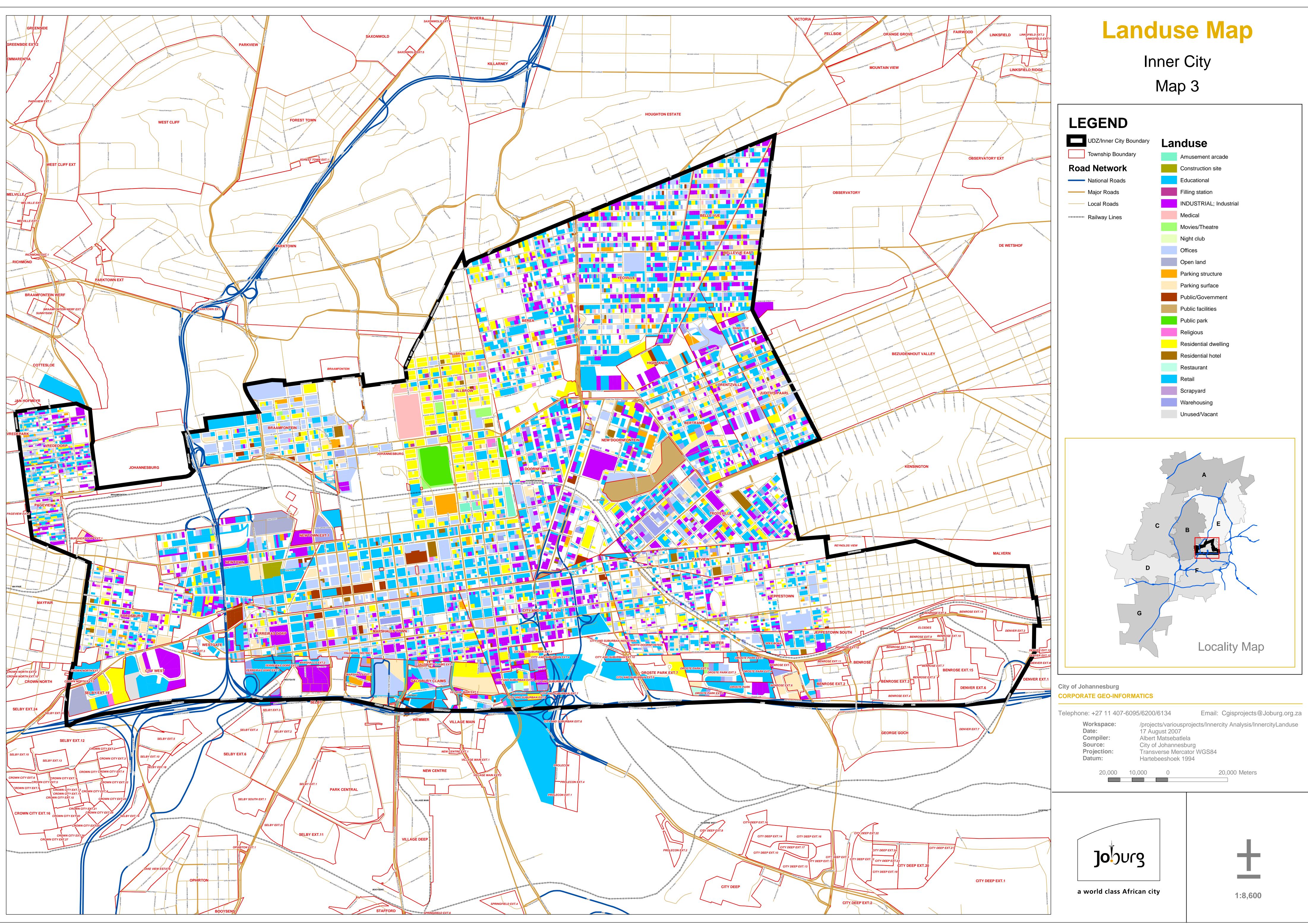
1.7.4 The "market-based" approach to urban regeneration or Privatism⁷

The term "market-based" approach to urban regeneration is used in this study to collectively refer to those initiatives that seek to influence the market so as to stimulate private sector investment and urban regeneration. It is synonymous with the notion of "privatism" which is defined as '*a tradition that encourages a reliance on the private sector as the principal agent of urban change*' (Barnekov *et al*, 1989, p. 1) or '*the belief in the supremacy of the private sector and market forces in nurturing development, with the public sector as a junior partner whose principal obligation is to facilitate capital accumulation*' (Squires, 1997, p. 267).

⁷ Privatism should not be confused with the process of privatization. The former depicts an ideology that governs the relationship between public and private sectors. Whereas the latter refers to specific policy of transferring authority and ownership of particular industries or services from government agencies to private entrepreneurs (Squires, 1997).



Map 3: Inner City land-use Map





1.7.5 The City of Johannesburg

The terms City of Johannesburg or Johannesburg Council are used frequently in this study in reference to the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council. This is the organ of the state that is primarily responsible for the regeneration of the Johannesburg Inner City.

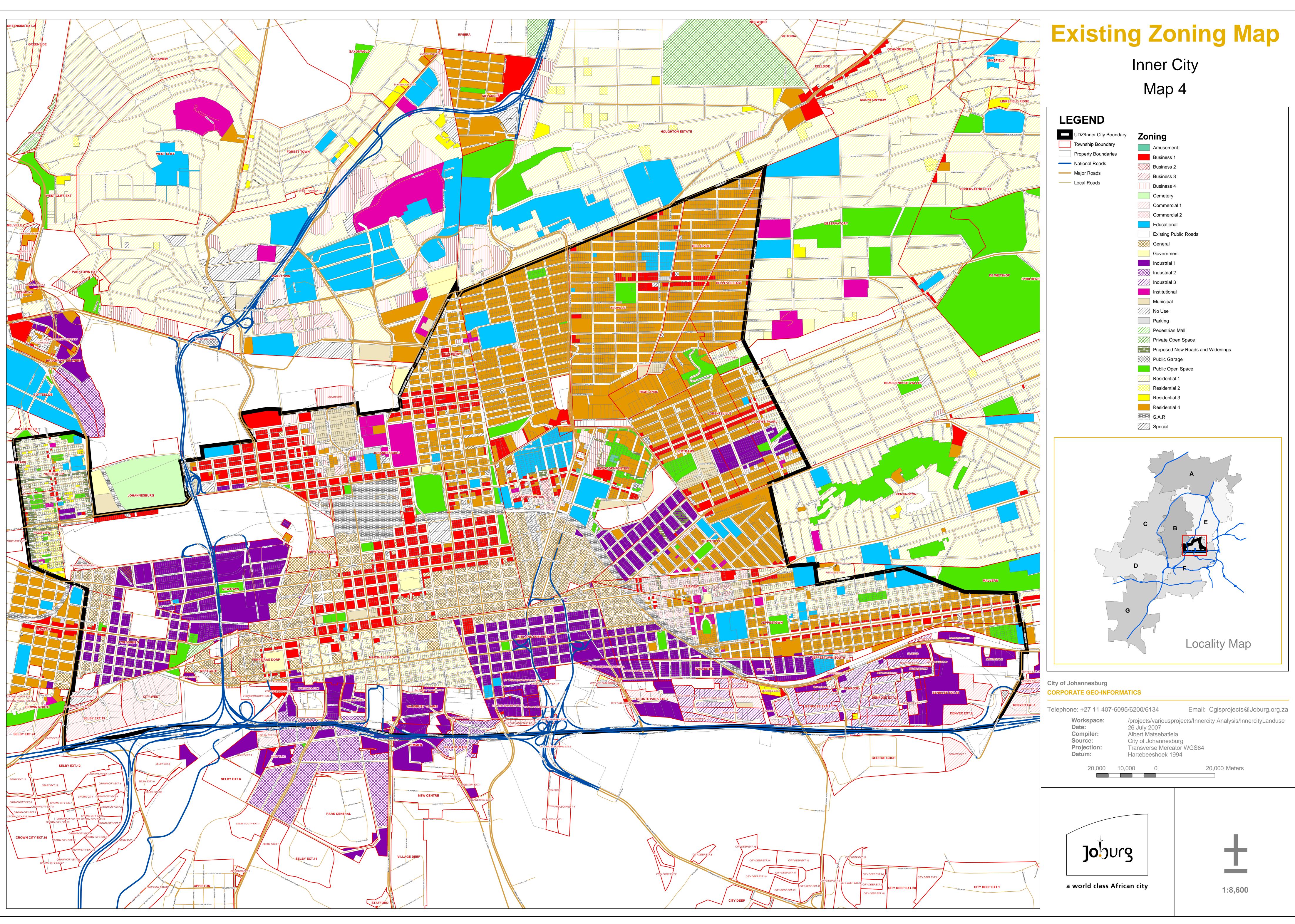
1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study consists of 8 chapters. Chapter 1 has provided the background to the study. It has set out the purpose of the study by highlighting the research problem and sub-problems and also outlines the significance of this study. Chapter 2 discusses the research methodology that was used to gather the data and reasons for choosing such methodology. It outlines the criteria used in selecting respondents (sampling criteria), as well as their profile. Chapter 3 covers the substantive theory and literature review on urban regeneration and promotion of private sector investment. Based on the rich body of mainly international literature, it provides the ideological logic for promoting private sector investment in an urban regeneration set-up. It also presents the general perceptions held by the private sector about investing in urban regeneration schemes as well as measures that are often introduced to address such perceptions.

Chapter 3 also highlights some of the inherent flaws of the "market-based" approach to urban regeneration, internationally, and its contents will be subsequently used to buttress the findings of the study in terms of the shortfall of the Johannesburg strategy of urban regeneration. Chapter 4 is the continuation of chapter 3 – the two remain separate chapters to avoid an extremely long single chapter. However, chapter 4 provides an overview of theoretical literature that bears on the study. It engages various theoretical constructs and conceptual approaches that could help to unravel the notion of urban regeneration. These theoretical strands are later used to highlight the tensions and debates around the "market-based" approaches to urban regeneration.



Map 4: Inner City zoning plan





Chapter 5 provides the background to the Johannesburg Inner City and particularly the emergence of urban regeneration initiatives aligning this with the emergence of the strategy that seeks to promote private sector investment inner city. Using various studies that have been conducted in the Johannesburg Inner City, the chapter highlights emerging themes, perspectives and debates from literature. Chapter 6 presents the data that was collected through interview surveys. It draws interesting correlations between various data sets as well as implications of such correlations for the process of urban regeneration and private sector investment.

It gives hints about some of the emerging trends and perspectives about the inner city. Chapter 7 provides the detailed analysis of the data that was presented in chapter 6, discusses significant findings and highlights major conclusions that the study draws. In doing so it highlights some of the significant shortcomings of the local urban regeneration strategy that seeks to promote private sector investment and the serious long-term implications of these to the process of urban regeneration. Chapter 8 concludes the study by reiterating some of the major findings and themes emerging from the study. It also suggests areas for future research.