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**INVESTIGATING COMMUNITY-BASED MAPPING AS A PLATFORM FOR INFORMAL  
SETTLEMENT RESIDENTS TO MAP SPATIAL INJUSTICES**

Opportunity Analysis for Alaska Informal Settlement in Mamelodi

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**FIELDWORK DATA**

## **Interview transcript: City of Tshwane**

*Date of interview: 03 May 2024*

**Researcher:** Let me start by thanking you for being available for this. I don't know if you had time, to review the documents I sent, to get an idea of what I am doing. I wanted to check if you had a chance, to go through the documents I sent. What I am trying to do for this research, is to test if the current mapping systems we have, like your GIS, Google Maps and so forth, do justice in terms of mapping our informal settlements. I want to try a bottom-up approach, where I go into the community of Alaska and try to gather data so that later, I can use it to generate a new map for their settlement so that at the end I can compare what I came up with and what you find on Google Maps or other mapping systems. So that is just a background of what I want to achieve.

**Respondent:** When you say in the communities, what kind of mapping are you exactly doing within that community itself, what is it that you will be mapping and what is it in which you are more interested?

**Researcher:** I am interested in mapping the special fabric. I want to see firstly if the area as I look at it on a map now, is as condensed as it is when I'm there and I also want to look at whether they have access to services, so I'll be mapping water points, I saw the last time I was there a lot of JoJo Tanks on the streets. I want to map hazards like dumping sites, and they can also show me areas prone to floods, etc. The aim is to create a map that tells us a bit more about the living conditions in the area.

**Respondent:** From my side, what kind of information would you need from me, what kind of questions do you have?

**Researcher:** From your side, I guess, the first thing is that I would like to understand what kind of information you have or use to map these settlements, are you relying on GIS? What kind of tools do you use currently? Basically, how do you map your settlements?

**Respondent:** When I was reading, I thought that I would be able to assist with certain questions concerning that. I will advise more if you speak to someone from the human settlement department. You were referred to me because I am the special planner for Region Six, where the informal settlement you're focusing on is. In Region 6 Mamelodi side, am I correct?

**Researcher:** Yes, it is.

**Respondent:** I think what will be of interest and benefit to you regarding information, I would say you must also interview a planner from our human settlement department. They would

have even more knowledge of how they manage informal settlements because they oversee the management of informal settlements, so we are more on the strategic side of the planning and management of those settlements.

**Researcher:** Okay thanks, I will reach out to human settlements via the guy who referred me to you.

**Respondent:** I will give you contact information, she is a planner in human settlement, she will be able to help you, or she'll refer you to someone else working with Region 6 sides if she is not the one working with Region 6 sides. That is where you will get most of your information.

**Researcher:** Thank you. From your side is there anything you can give me or make me aware of?

**Respondent:** We can continue, I was saying that for more information for your research, it will help to speak to other people. Regarding what kind of information, we use, we relay GIS and Ariel Photo, but the disadvantage of Ariel Photo is that it will only measure the area's growth. It has its shortcomings where most of the time we can also do a count in terms of the informal area on the Ariel Photo, but it becomes tough to map some of the things you mentioned, like water points. Municipalities install water points that are sometimes mapped, the only problem is that when we get into the informal settlement which we call rudimental services they are not primary services so the GIS would not capture them. The other disadvantage is that we do not fly every month or year to capture an Ariel Photo, our current Ariel Photo is from 2023, and it is a good one. The one which we were using previously was from 2020. You can also see that we can only look at what happened in three years and see how rapidly the informal area grows. I worked directly with informal settlements when I was in the city of Johannesburg, what you observe this weekend might be different from what you see the next weekend, it is a challenge keeping a record of these settlements so you can already see that Ariel Photographs are not that effective. But then again there is another question, why do we fly and all that? As much as this is one of the things we must answer, it is so mandated for us to do that, which is why we cannot answer all those questions. Other than that, what you will get in the human settlement department through the Nabes program, what they will do is the counting of the informal settlements, the number of structures and the number of people living in those settlements. That program is used to get to know who is in settlement etc. So according to that it will depend on what kind of information you will get from them, that is the information that will be as close to the ground because that is the numeration, that the human settlement department starts asking questions door by door but, if you look at it, they not checking things like your community taps etc so it's not an informal settlement analysis.

## **Interview transcript: Department of Human Settlements**

*Date of interview: 6 May 2024*

**Researcher:** Thank you for making time for this interview.

**Respondent:** So I know that the department does not really implement programmes, right? But in this case, how far do you go in terms of planning, do you physically go into the settlement? Or do you only give the mandate to the City?

**Researcher:** Okay, before I answer that, in your introduction, you said that the maps that you have don't have get the details that you need?

**Researcher:** Yeah. On the maps that you have, which maps are those? So the maps that you have from where? Okay. I got a few maps from Tshwane GIS portal, the online one, I'm gonna try and project one.

So I extracted the zoning map, as well as the sanitation map. And then but generally, okay, I think let me try and share my screen. Then, you know, just so that you know, from from which angle I'm coming from as well.

Okay, so I opened that one. Okay. I'm gonna share my screen now.

Okay. Okay. Is it showing on your side? Yeah, it is showing from my side.

Okay, cool. Yeah. So I mean, obviously, I understand that this is a zoning map and zoning is a formal process, right? We want zoning doesn't acknowledge informalities, because we see informalities as a problem that needs to be right.

But when you look at that map, Alaska, there's so Alaska sits at the foot of that, that that that I think it's my heart is big. So when you look at that map, you see that that brown boundary there, which shows you that the informal settlement is there. But you know, there's no difference really, if you didn't know, you wouldn't know that there's a mountain on the right and the settlement on the left, right? Yeah, they like when you look at this picture, it basically tells you about this township on the left.

And it basically tells you nothing about the about Alaska. Then another map that I also sourced was the sanitation map. And obviously, they are no services on an informal settlement.

So you can blame this map. But I feel like an aerial photograph does better justice, because you can already see there's a settlement there, although it doesn't really tell you much about that. So what I'm looking for is to have a similar map.

But when you look at it, it tells you that we have a hazard there. This area is prone to floods. This is a place of worship.

This is a tavern. And I also hope that my map in the end will be able to map the tech shops and street vendors and all of that. So I'm really looking to create a map that tells you a bit more detail about like an informal settlement in the same way that it would for a normal formal township.

**Respondent:** Okay, who did you speak to?

**Researcher:** I spoke to a spatial planner in the City's planning department. And then he said, I should speak to someone at Human Settlements as well. Apparently, their GIS is very good. And from time to time, they do, to a certain extent, map informal settlements, although they may not have mapped all of them. But he just said, I should check if they have any information that can also assist me.

**Respondent:** Okay. So the maps that you've highlighted here, it's not the maps that we use for upgrading of informal settlements. So we would actually zoom into Alaska.

And in that map, we'll be able to see if there's a wetland, for instance, if the area needs re-blocking, if we need to move the shacks around. So we go into great detail, like the programme upgrading of informal settlements. So it's divided into three phases, how we go about upgrading an informal settlement.

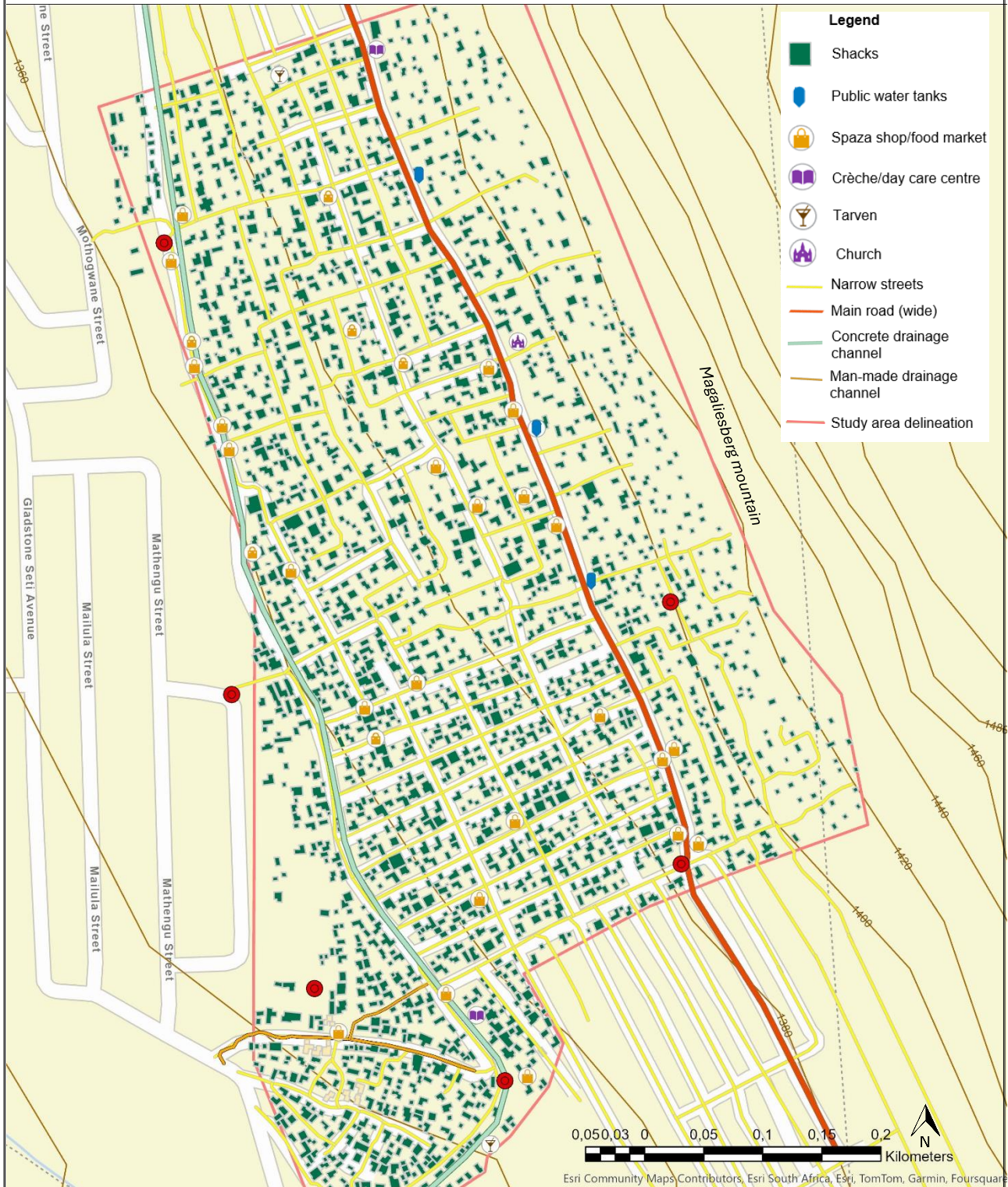
So go to the Housing Code, right? I'm not sure what is the volume, but then if you go to our housing code, you will see the process of upgrading of informal settlements. Okay.

So and when I'm saying upgrading of informal settlements, I'm talking about in-situ upgrading. So there's three phases. Phase one, it's pre-feasibility studies, right? That's where now we go into an informal settlement.

So we go to Alaska. We will now start counting the shacks that are there, right? So we do that together with the community, right? And then from there, we are also doing our desktop, looking at the condition of the area. If we can continue with the housing development in the area, of course, looking at your Geotech, looking at your EIAs, all those pre-feasibility studies.

Output map: Points of interest

## POINTS OF INTEREST AND LAYOUT OF ALASKA INFORMAL SETTLEMENT



Map 1: Points of interest and layout of Alaska Informal Settlement.

Map created by the researcher: Mokonyama (2024).