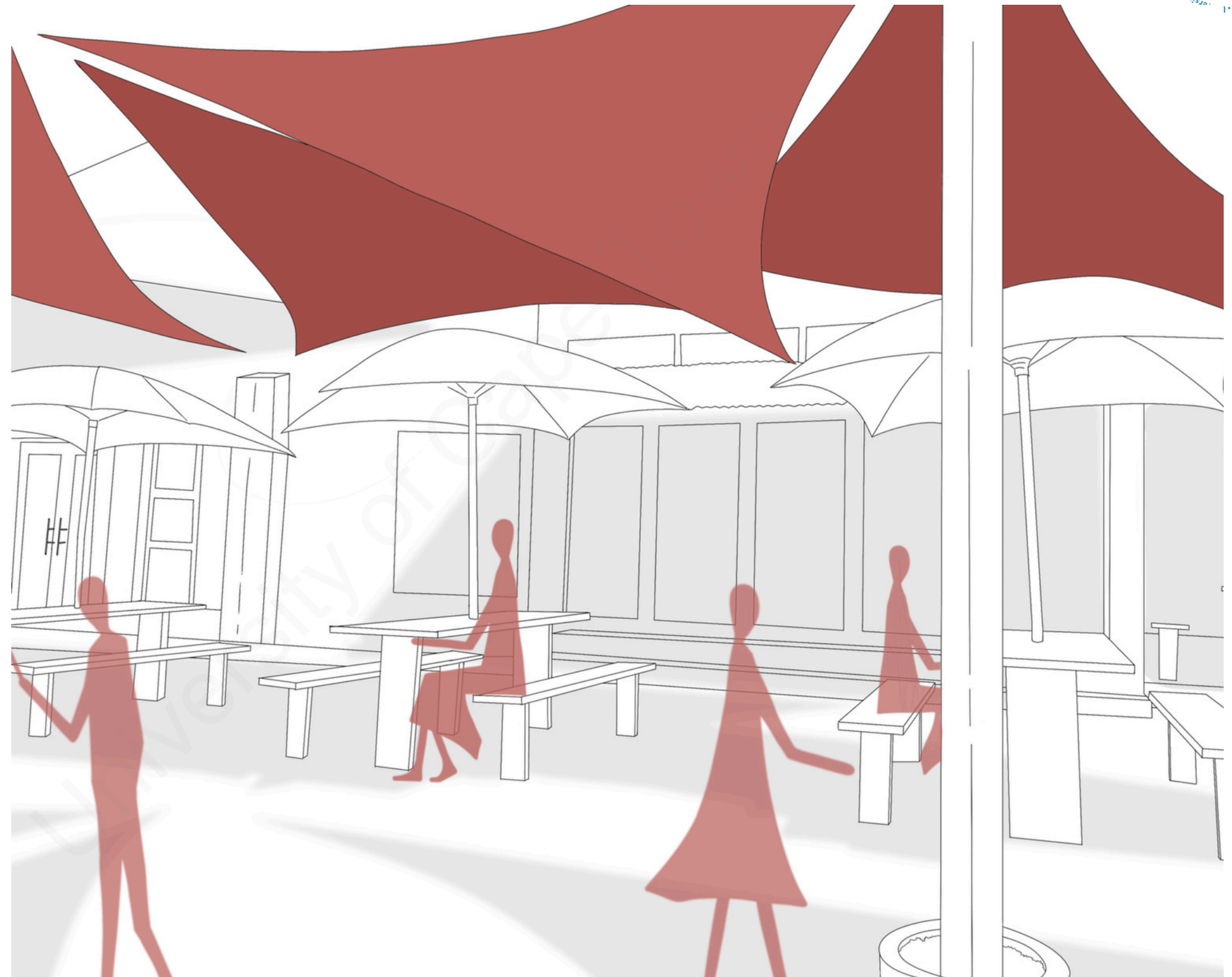


HIDDEN GEMS

REIMAGINING THE PUBLIC
REALM ALONG
INDEPENDENCE AVENUE
TO SUSTAIN THE LOCAL
ECONOMY IN THE
WINDHOEK CENTRAL
BUSINESS DISTRICT

Gwen Persaud
PRSFRI001
Masters of Urban Design
University of Cape Town
2024



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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Urban Design Degree
60 Credits

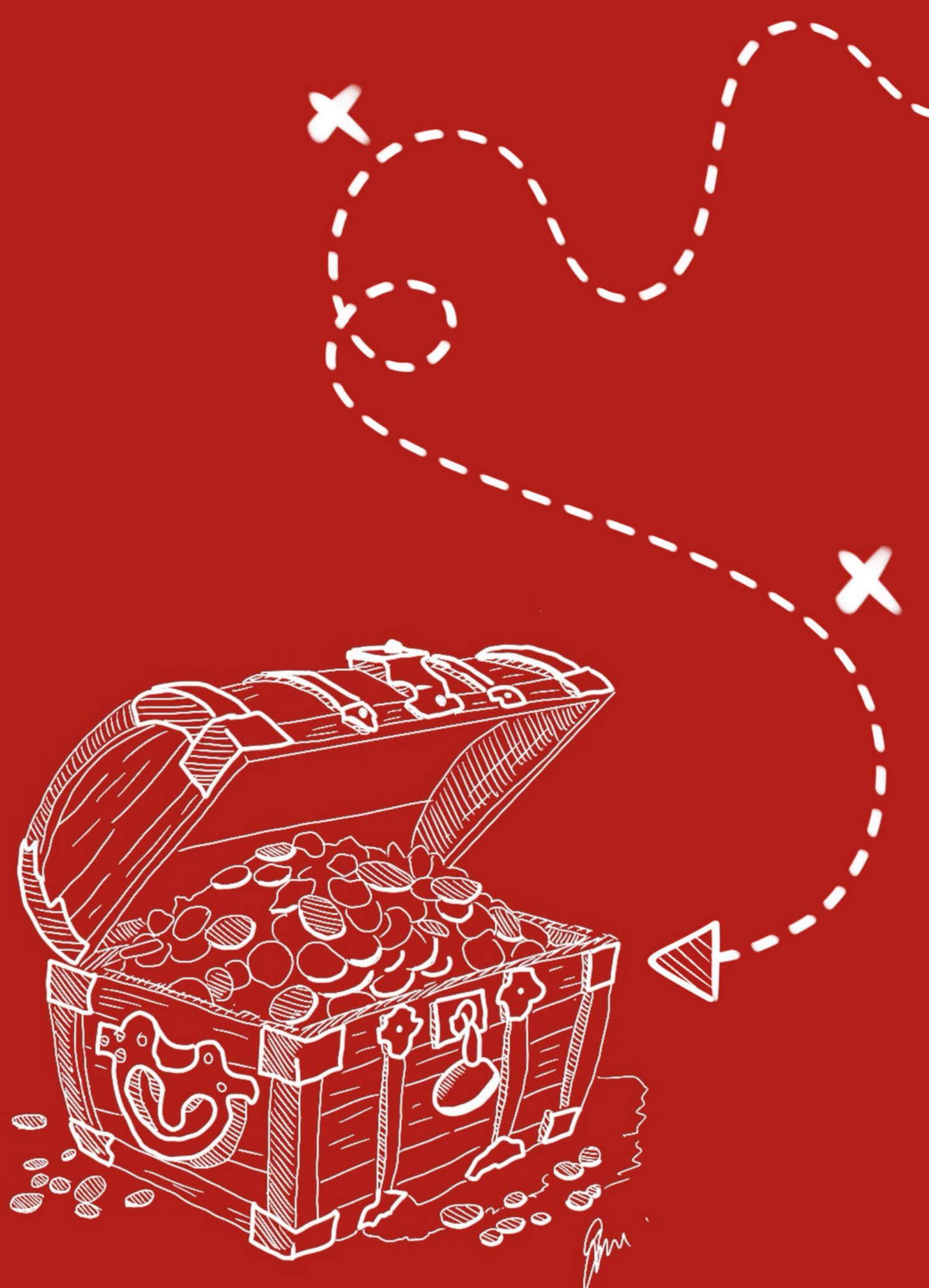
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This research project is dedicated to anyone who offered me a kind word and helpful suggestion.



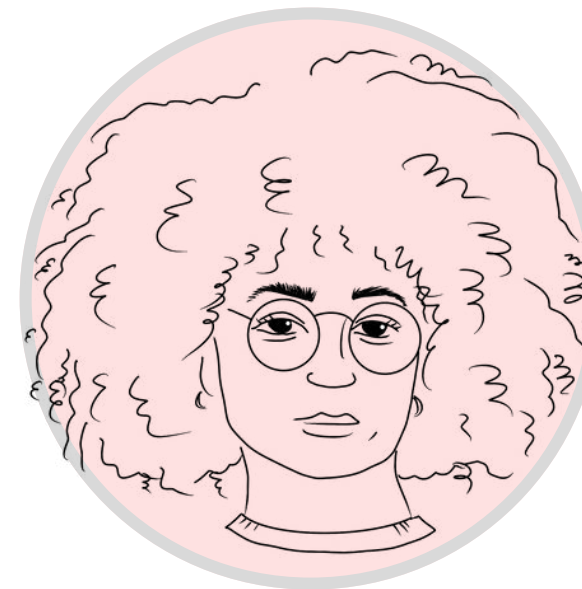
ABSTRACT

This urban design research project investigates the reimagining of the public realm along **Independence Avenue** to sustain the local economy in the context of the **Windhoek Central Business District** (CBD). The research seeks to explore how the public spaces can be transformed to support local businesses, foster Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and stimulate overall economic development and growth. The research question drives this research to understand ‘How can the public realm sustain the local economy?’.

Through **qualitative methodologies** such as critical theory analysis of the relationship between economies and the public realm, rhythm analysis for field observations and semi-structured interviews, this research examines the current state of the public realm along Independence Avenue. The research analyses the role of urban design concepts like **placemaking and human-centred design** in shaping local economic activity. The findings highlight the untapped potential of “hidden gems” as clusters of local economic innovation that can be reinforced. The research highlights the significance of accessibility, connectivity, optionality and placemaking principles in creating a vibrant and thriving public realm that empowers both local businesses and the broader community.

By contextualising this CBD regeneration to a postcolonial urban environment, this research contributes to an existing body of knowledge on urban regeneration and local economic development. It provides actionable recommendations for stakeholders and policymakers to enhance the public realm in a way that promotes sustainable economic growth in the Windhoek CBD. In doing so, it also presents valuable insights into how urban design can play a key role in fostering economic resilience and innovation in the context of Windhoek.

Keywords: public realm, local economy, small-medium-micro enterprises, Windhoek Central Business District, Independence Avenue, sustainable development



Welcome to my urban design research booklet, where we explore the Windhoek CBD to transform the public realm to sustain the local economy. Here are some abbreviations to look out for:

- CBD - Central Business District
- GDP - Gross Domestic Product
- LED - Local Economic Development
- SMME - Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises

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CHAPTER

1

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

INTRODUCTION

Locality: Windhoek

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

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This first chapter will offer a thorough overview of the research project, emphasising its goals and importance in the larger context of urban design. It will explore the influences that shaped the project as the researcher's positionality. In addition, this chapter will describe the spatial environment in which the project is situated, exploring the distinct features and difficulties of the region, along with the historical and cultural elements that impact its progress.

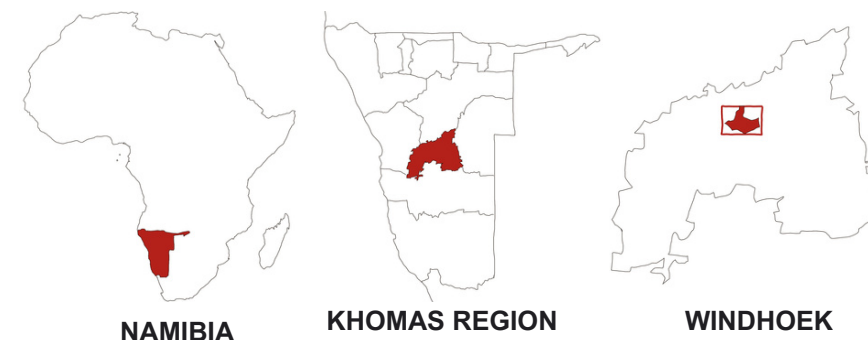
INTRODUCTION

A solid foundation is necessary for a city to prosper and grow. In this chapter, 'Laying the Groundwork' doesn't just mean laying bricks and mortar, but rather establishing ideas that will transform Windhoek's Central Business District, also known as Town, according to Namibians. The town needs to be moulded to embody the vision, creativity, and adaptability of the Namibian people, becoming a living entity that incorporates their values. We imagine changing the public space to support both economic sustainability and social interactions that align with the city's future. Picture a Windhoek CBD that is not just a passageway for your morning work commute, but a location where gatherings can occur at the bank's café on the groundfloor, impromptu chats start at the government office's public library, and lively art and creativity hubs in an evening pub. Imagine a CBD area that not only serves the needs of its employees but also welcomes everyone, from students practising rugby on nearby fields to young entrepreneurs starting their businesses at temporary stalls. This is the goal that this research aims to attain in Windhoek. Before those aspirations and ambitions can be achieved, we need to establish the foundation for the Windhoek scene. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Windhoek's current urban character by delving into its historical background and present city layout. Developing a comprehensive understanding of Windhoek at a broader level is crucial to comprehend the urban setting of the Windhoek CBD.

**"WE NEED TO PRESERVE OUR
NEIGHBOURHOODS, OUR SMALL
BUSINESS, OUR LOCAL ECONOMY."
- MARIA SEMPLE**

LOCALITY: WINDHOEK

This project is located in the heart of Windhoek, Namibia: The CBD. Different to the common grid structure of a typical CBD, it is a linear development with varying street hierarchies. Characterised by 4-metre ground floors the tallest building being the 100-metre Old Mutual building. It is located in a valley where there is a mountain on the East where one can find the Windhoek Botanical Gardens and hiking trail. While Independence itself is flat, the streets connecting to it are at a gradient. It is a commercial centre containing 4 private schools, and government offices north, while newer building developments are zoned for mixed-use development.



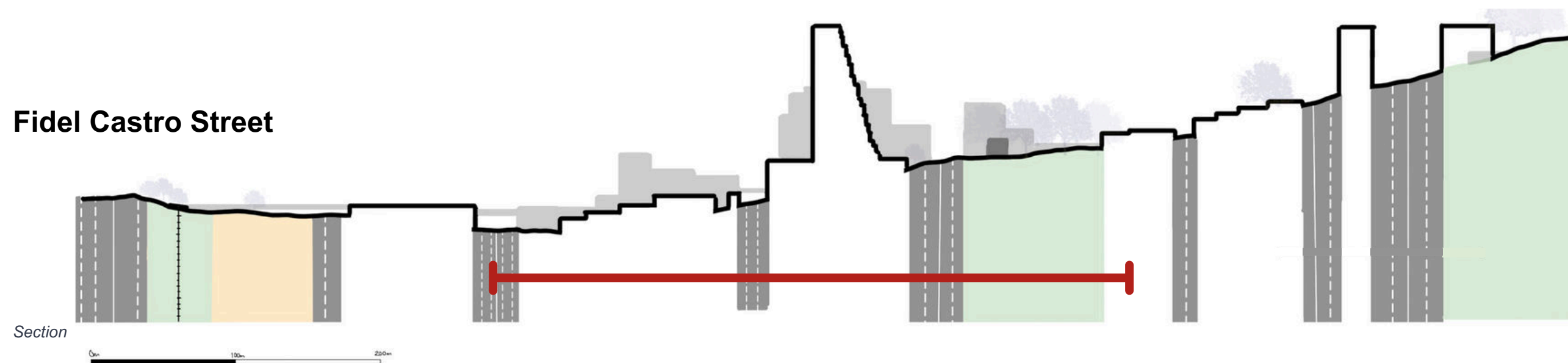
LOCALITY: WINDHOEK



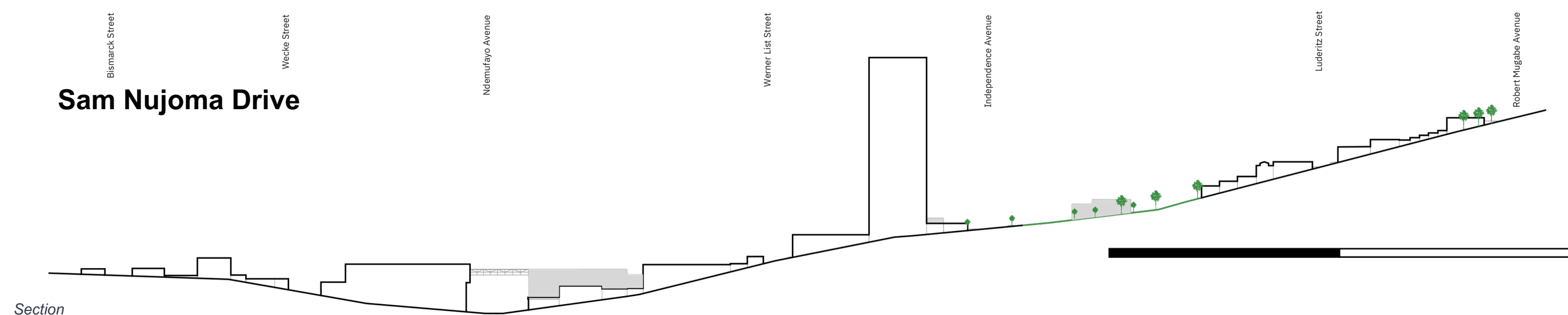
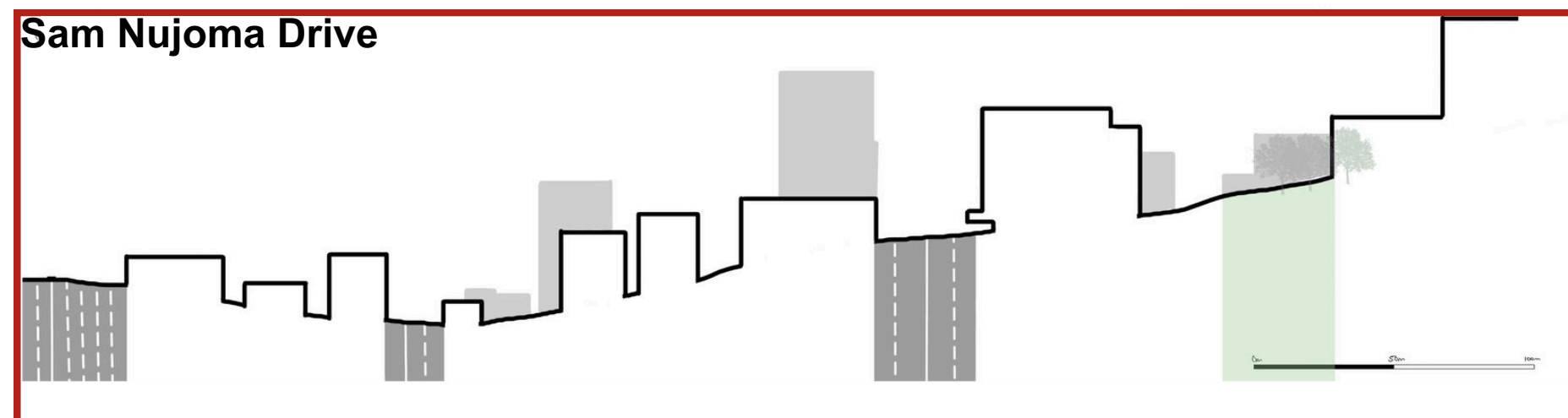
Aerial Windhoek, Source: Youtube

LOCALITY: WINDHOEK

Fidel Castro Street



Sam Nujoma Drive



HISTORIC PROFILE

Colonial beginnings

According to Roland (2024), Windhoek's spatial structure originated during German colonisation in the late 1800s, with the city designed to maintain control over the native people. It was divided into three areas (administrative, military and agricultural). That segregation was reflected in the North-South trade routes to control native housing and perpetuate the socio-spatial divide. Colonial authorities enforced racial separations by creating designated areas for Europeans and black Namibians in places like Old Location. Spatial practices included buffer zones and visual surveillance, which reinforced social hierarchies. The railway, built to facilitate German economic interests, also became a physical barrier separating ethnic communities within the city. European-style buildings like the Christuskirche and the Tintenpalast were constructed with aesthetics that symbolised German rule and aimed to impress upon locals a sense of European superiority. These German structures still stand today, representing both a tourist attraction and a controversial colonial past.

Postcolonial and apartheid-era influences

Windhoek's urban landscape reflects both colonial and postcolonial influences, merging formal and informal elements (van Greunen, 2021). South African administration extended colonial practices and introduced apartheid policies, further institutionalising spatial segregation. By enforcing formalised locations for Black Namibians, strict curfews and limiting urban access, forcing Namibian businesses into the cracks of Windhoek, hoping to emerge. These policies entrenched socio-economic disparities and made it difficult for Black Namibians to access economic opportunities in the CBD. Friedman (2000) did a study that reveals the divide between the former township and Katutura and predominantly white, eastern Windhoek neighbourhoods. These legacies continue to impact urban spatial dynamics and economic divides in Windhoek (Freidman, 2000). These ideals are so ingrained into societies' perceptions, that a mindset shift is needed to achieve decolonisation (Landman, 2021).

Implications for contemporary urban design

Windhoek's spatial evolution under colonial and apartheid influence has left a legacy of economic exclusion and spatial inequity (Roland et al., 2024). Postcolonial cities are characterised by colonialist spatial planning that restricts movement (Baffoe & Roy, 2022) and perpetuates socioeconomic divisions. Van Greunen (2021) mentions how in Windhoek there are spaces of inclusion and exclusion, this can also be found and reflected in the Windhoek CBD. Windhoek is a complex system where both physical structures and social interactions interconnect to create distinct urban experiences. These insights suggest that revitalising public spaces, redeveloping historic areas, and improving access to economic opportunities could address these disparities. Integrating small-scale economic activities in hidden alleyways and enhancing access to central areas for all residents could contribute significantly to the local economy's sustainability in the CBD.



Independence Day (National Archives Namibia, 1990)

SUMMARY

Independence Avenue was developed during the German colonial rule that began development here due to its ideal location and hot springs. It was the first paved road in Windhoek. In 2023, Stephanie Roland released an article where she described Windhoek as an uncanny capital. She talked about how Windhoek has an unsettling, uncomfortable and hostile feel due to the remnants of colonial rule that are non-seamlessly integrated into new, sanitised developments. The colonial spatial arrangement has caused this centre for economic opportunity and growth to be separated from the rest of Windhoek through socio-spatial barriers and structures. These have promoted spatial injustice due to the growth of low- and informal-income areas, and the lack of affordable public transport and housing options that would ideally make a more accessible CBD. In an attempt to promote connectivity, Independence Avenue extends into the low-income areas where they are integrated with MoveWindhoek bus systems.

SPATIAL INJUSTICE

- 62.4% of households in the country are considered ultra-low-income, earning less than N\$5,000 per month.
- One trip to the CBD:
 - Taxi - N\$13.00 to N\$ 56.00
 - MoveWindhoek - N\$6.50 to N\$7.50
- About 50% of Windhoek lives in informal settlements.
- The average price of a house is N\$1 417 000.
- Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre: 7,422.22

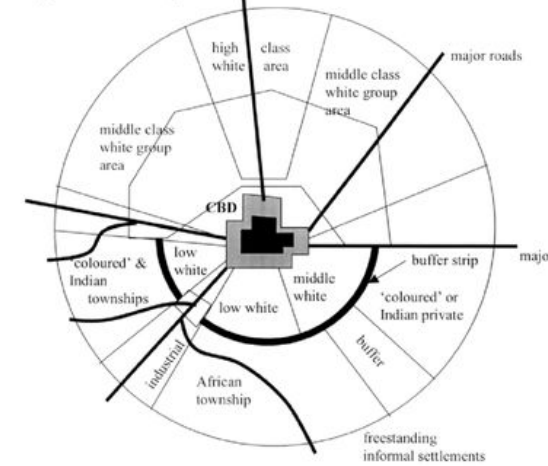
SEGREGATION, SEPARATION AND DISPLACEMENT



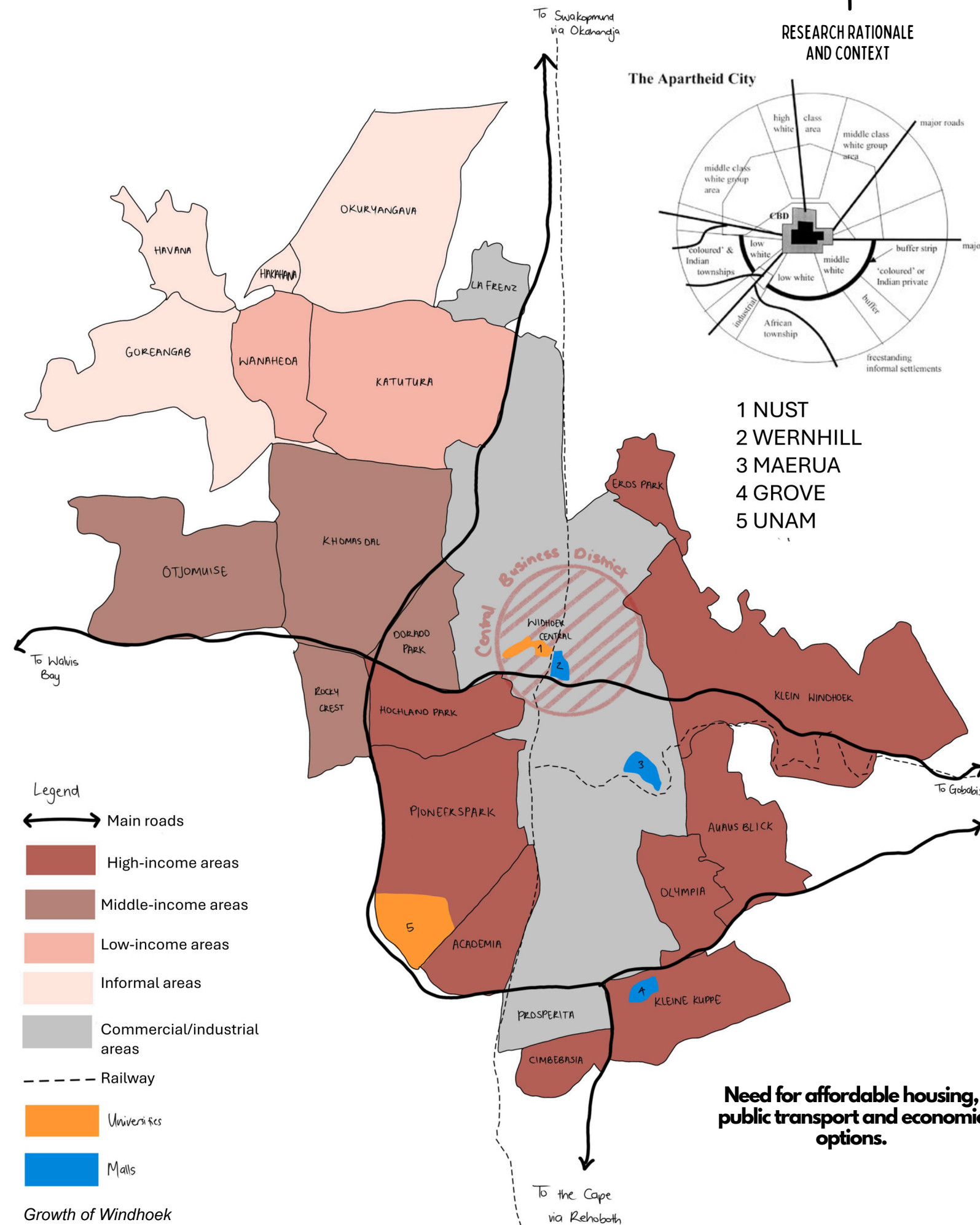
Informal Settlement in Windhoek

1 RESEARCH RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

The Apartheid City



- 1 NUST
- 2 WERNHILL
- 3 MAERUA
- 4 GROVE
- 5 UNAM



URBAN EVOLUTION OF INDEPENDENCE AVENUE

Independence Avenue evolved from Kaiser Strasse. In 1928, Kaiser Strasse became the first paved road in Windhoek, signifying its importance as the centre of Windhoek. Since its Independence in 1990, Independence Avenue has been the only economic strip in Windhoek. In the early 2000s, the Windhoek CBD had various local businesses, in comparison to 2024 where there are vacant buildings and commercial franchises.



Zoo Park (National Archives Namibia, 1970)



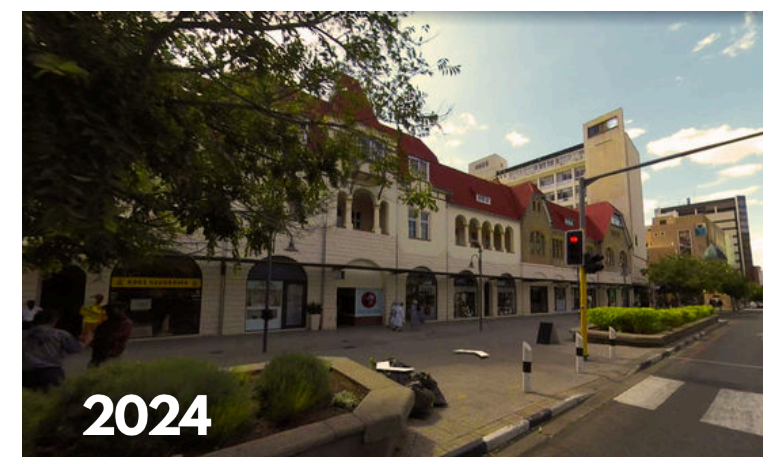
Zoo Park (Author, 2024)



Kaiser Street (National Archives Namibia, 1910)



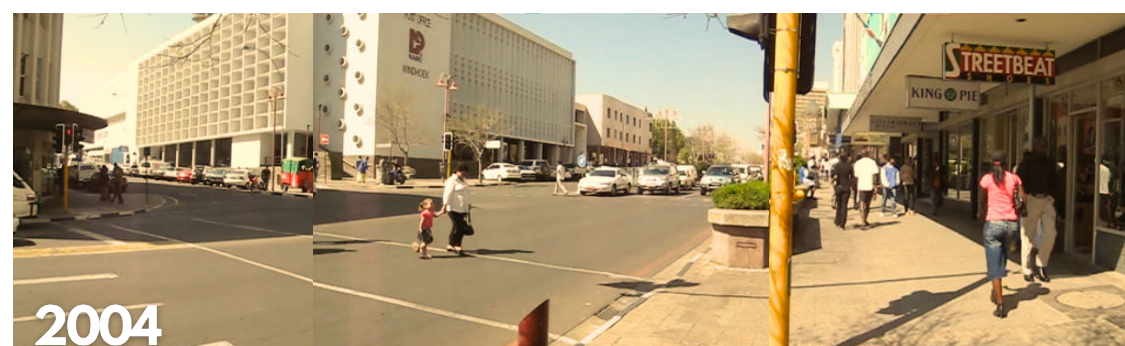
Kaiser Street (National Archives Namibia, 1952)



Independence Avenue via Google Earth (2024)



Post Office (National Archives Namibia, 1952)



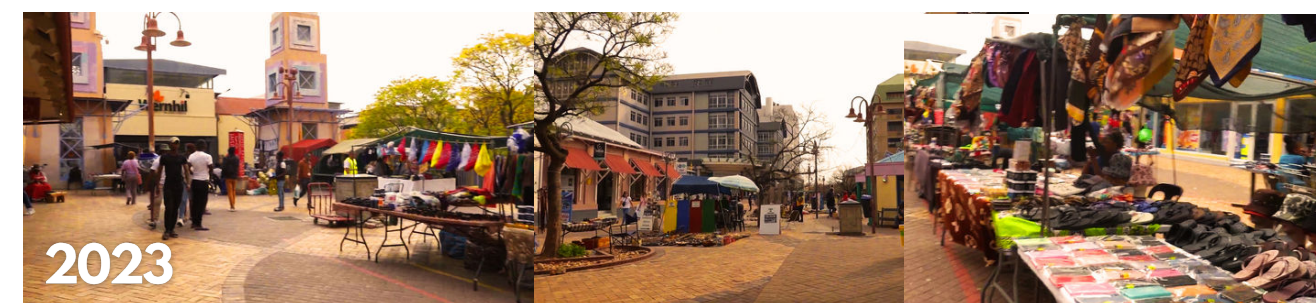
Clive Cooper - Windhoek (Panoramic View) Namibia [9UzwlQFZ42Y - 640x480 - 0m01s]



Post Office via Google Earth (2024)



Clive Cooper - Windhoek (Panoramic View) Namibia [9UzwlQFZ42Y - 640x480 - 0m01s]



Post Street Mall - Masatomi Kyouso Inagaki - Walk around a street in Windhoek, Namibia [ITPfv18S31M - 1920x1080 - 4m31s]

INDEPENDENCE TODAY

A Central Business District (CBD) of a city typically contains the main commercial strip, higher-order services, and prominent public buildings (Rice, 2009). Originally, Windhoek's CBD was designed primarily for administrative functions rather than as a commercial or residential hub. It developed as a linear district, with government and commercial buildings concentrated along its main avenue, surrounded by adjacent residential areas. This concentration of government services has limited economic diversification, confining commercial activity to a small area, which results in congestion and limited vibrancy after hours.

Remnants of German colonial architecture are evident in the district's wide streets, large blocks, and substantial government buildings, reflecting historical influences on the city's built environment. However, Windhoek's CBD is relatively low-density compared to other global CBDs, emphasising an orderly layout over the economic intensity and vibrancy often seen in denser, post-colonial urban centres. Safety concerns persist, particularly in underutilised spaces—such as areas beneath bridges—where lack of activity heightens risks after business hours. Windhoek is an “uncanny valley” that reflects the city's complex between historical, cultural and German architectural elements, often resulting in a sense of unfamiliarity and discomfort for residents and visitors. The built environment in Windhoek, much like other postcolonial cities can evoke feelings of disconnect due to its uneasy mix of indigenous and colonial spatial arrangements. Modern, sanitised structures sit alongside remnants of colonial-era buildings.

Comparison to Lagos Island CBD



<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/510330-ease-of-doing-business-nigeria-sets-60-day-plan-after-agencies-failed-six-times.html?tztc=1>



German buildings in CBD

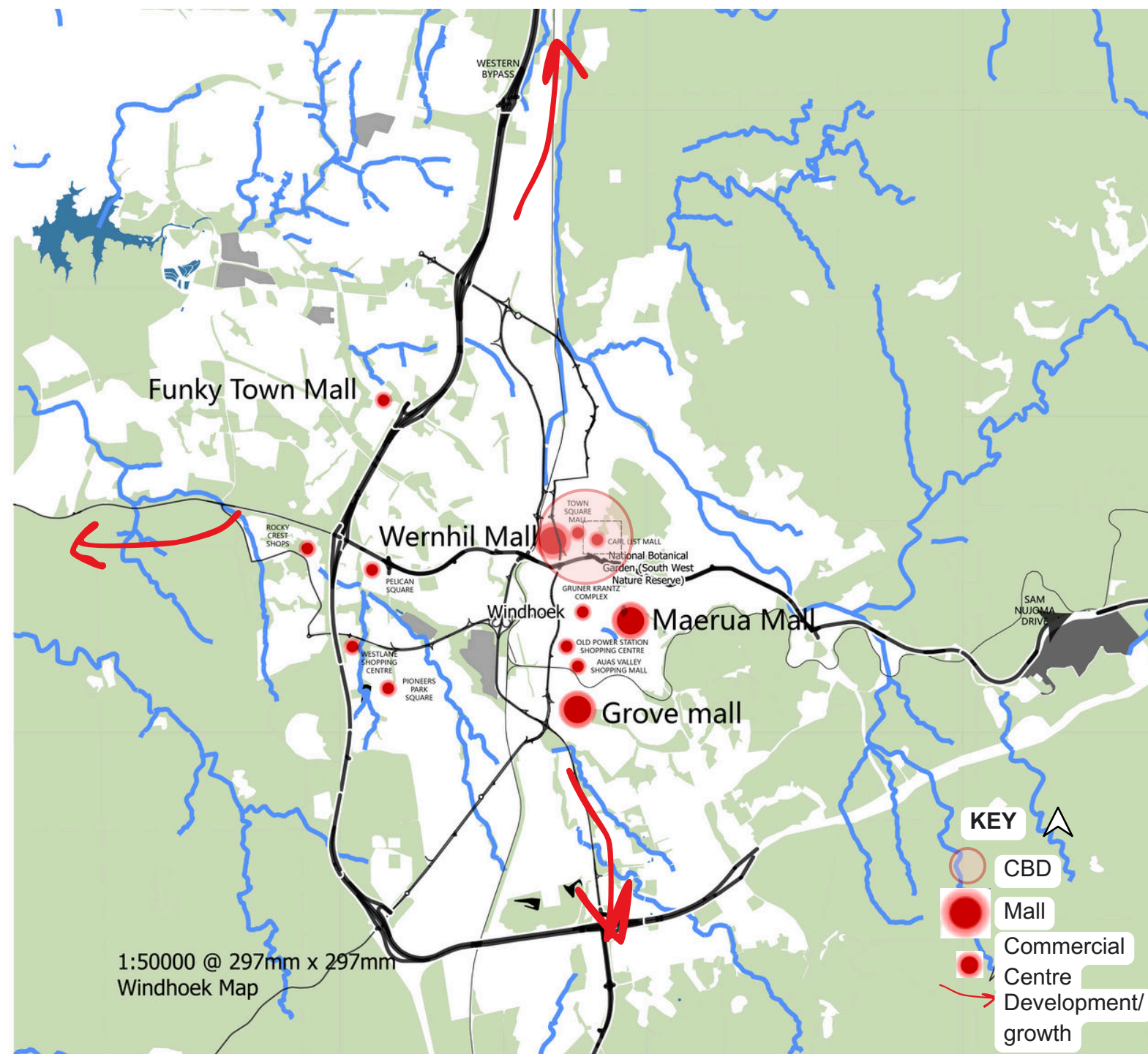


German buildings in CBD

ECONOMIC SHIFTS

Urban decay

Influenced by the Charter of Athens, early urban designs emphasised functional zoning by situating industrial areas to the city outskirts and centring business districts around public parks (Rego, 2011). In Windhoek, the Central Business District (CBD), especially along Independence Avenue, has faced a progressive economic downturn, reduced pedestrian activity, and a lack of engaging public spaces. These issues create underutilised urban areas with a lack of support for local businesses, and limited opportunities for community interaction due to the spatial inequalities ingrained in colonial planning. Urban decay in the CBD is driven by complex economic shifts, such as gentrification, increased unemployment, economic downturns and inflation. These shifts attract franchises to the CBD, increasing rental costs and property values and displacing smaller, local businesses that cannot compete. Consequently, rising unemployment and limited economic opportunities lead to vacant properties, abandoned lots, and reduced public safety. These dynamics deepen socio-economic disparities and reshape the CBD's landscape, leading to high local unemployment, diminished quality of life, and widespread vacancy (Pinch, 2015; Silva et al., 2023). International franchises overpower the CBD, while local businesses increasingly follow Western trends. This focus on standardised services over local businesses weakens the presence of a unique Namibian culture within the urban centre, making it harder to find authentic local products and spaces (Silva et al., 2023). Historically, Windhoek's CBD was the core of social, cultural, and economic life. However, the expansion of suburban residential areas and new commercial developments has fueled urban decentralization. Local businesses which were once central to the CBD, now relocate to suburban commercial centres like Grove Mall, Maerua Mall, and Wernhill Park due to affordability and convenience. Diversified economic activities have further directed commercial activities out of the CBD, shifting consumer patterns and drawing foot traffic away from the centre of the city (Pinch, 2015). Reimagining public spaces will promote economic diversification, enhance convenience for business owners, and create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that showcases SMMEs. This research aims to suggest urban design interventions in Windhoek that can support local economic activity, boost small businesses, and revitalize the urban core by activating public spaces, improving connectivity, and developing inclusive pedestrian corridors.



Growth of economic centres in Windhoek

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A fragmented Windhoek CBD

Windhoek's CBD, specifically Independence Avenue, is experiencing a continuous decrease in both local economic vibrancy and pedestrian traffic. Formerly a bustling centre of economic activity and social interactions, the region is currently facing urban deterioration caused by underutilised areas, increased vacancy, and insufficient pedestrian activity to support SMMEs. Small, medium, and micro-enterprises are essential for the local economy, but these businesses are finding it more and more challenging to deal with expensive rent and low customer flow, causing many of them to leave the central business district and move to suburban areas. The CBD is mainly filled with franchises due to a lack of an active public space encouraging local businesses, resulting in minimal interaction with the community.

The current economic crisis is worsened by structural and spatial obstacles caused by unplanned development, colonial spatial planning legacies, and outdated infrastructure. These elements contribute to a lack of connectivity among important areas like the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), transportation hubs, and public spaces, ultimately reducing the vibrancy of the CBD. Additionally, the relocation of important offices like the Ministry of Home Affairs, Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) and Standard Bank Headquarters out of the central area has rendered them inaccessible. Moreover, poor pedestrian infrastructure, unsafe surrounding streets, and early trading hours worsen economic fragility, leading to inactivity and unproductive economic periods in the CBD.

In order to deal with these problems, it is important to rethink the public spaces in the CBD to promote economic variety, enhance convenience, and create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that emphasises small and medium-sized enterprises. This research aims to suggest urban design interventions in Windhoek that can support local economic activity, boost small businesses, and revitalize the urban core by activating public spaces, improving connectivity, and developing inclusive pedestrian corridors.



Vacancy in Town Square (Author, 2022)



Informality taking over Post Street Mall (Author, 2022)



Spring Markets in Independence Avenue (Author, 2022)



Underutilised space (Author, 2024)

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>STRENGTH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically located in the heart of Windhoek • Historical and cultural significance attracting tourism • Regularly maintained and cleaned streets | <p>WEAKNESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdated building infrastructure • Lack of mixed use and housing development • High congestion at peak traffic hours • Lack of affordable public transport • Consumed by parking lots and government offices • Long distanced to walk between buildings in the sun |
| <p>OPPORTUNITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Zoo Park as a green space and connect with other green spaces • Maximise limited space • Improve connectivity through public transportation • Promote mixed-use development • Integrate informal trade and street vendor | <p>THREAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of safety and security in quieter areas and at night • Competition from surrounding malls diverts resources away • Urban sprawl disperses economic activity away • Lack of interactive public spaces |

Swot analysis of CBD, author

PROBLEM STATEMENT

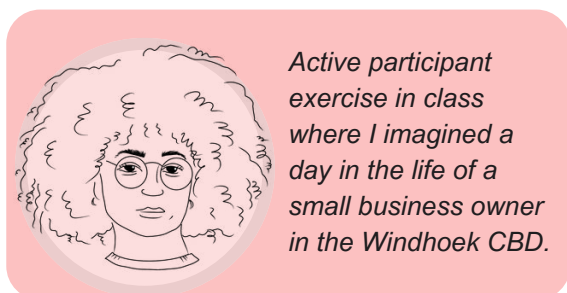
SMMEs

There are four sizes of enterprises: micro, small, medium and large. Small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) are referred to as businesses that have between 1-100 employees and an annual turnover of up to N\$10 million (Nedbank Namibia, 2024). The article titled “Small Businesses Big Impact” (Nedbank Namibia, 2024) describes how there are over 40,000 SMMEs in Namibia, contributing to about 12% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Bank of Namibia (2022) describes the roles of the different sectors in the promotion of sustainable economic growth: the private sector is the engine, while the public sector fosters an environment which enables entrepreneurs to explore opportunities and thus increase productivity, contribute to economic growth and create employment opportunities. SMMEs are faced with various aspatial challenges like rising inflation and access to financial support. Since 51% of Namibia’s population is digitally active, SMMEs must adapt to e-commerce opportunities (Nedbank Namibia, 2024). Examples of SMMEs are retail stores (local grocery shops, boutiques and convenience stores), service providers (hair salons, auto repair shops, cleaning services and plumbing services), food and beverage (small restaurants, cafes, food trucks), construction and trade (small construction firms, electricians, carpenters and landscapers), tech start ups, creative enterprises (photographers, graphic designers and artisans), health and wellness (gyms and yoga studios) and agriculture (fresh produce or livestock products).



Active participants

1. Day starting early morning for SMMEs, paging through magazines to get more ideas for business activity
2. Traffic and congestion, car-dominated and difficult for SMMEs to get to the CBD
3. SMMEs hoping for customers to sustain their businesses
4. SMMEs trying their best to attract customers from signage to aesthetics to discounts
5. Lack of third places for SMMEs to eat their lunch near their work or lack of time to do their business activities due to long distances to travel in the CBD.
6. SMMEs need a space to be innovative and access to resources
7. Nighttime is unsafe for SMMEs and their spaces are rampant with homeless
8. Hopes for SMMEs to be in a thriving CBD with mixed-use development, rooftop activation, public transport, variety of shops, housing developments and restaurant spillover on sidewalks.



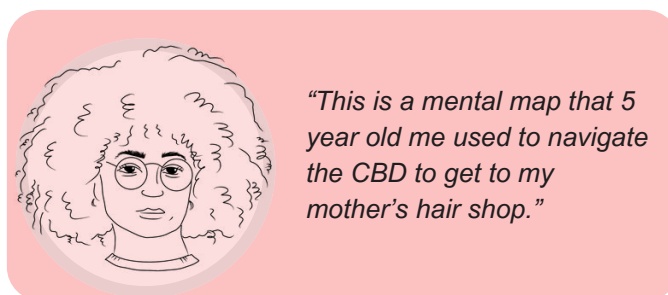
Active participant exercise in class where I imagined a day in the life of a small business owner in the Windhoek CBD.

POSITIONALITY

My mother's hair shop

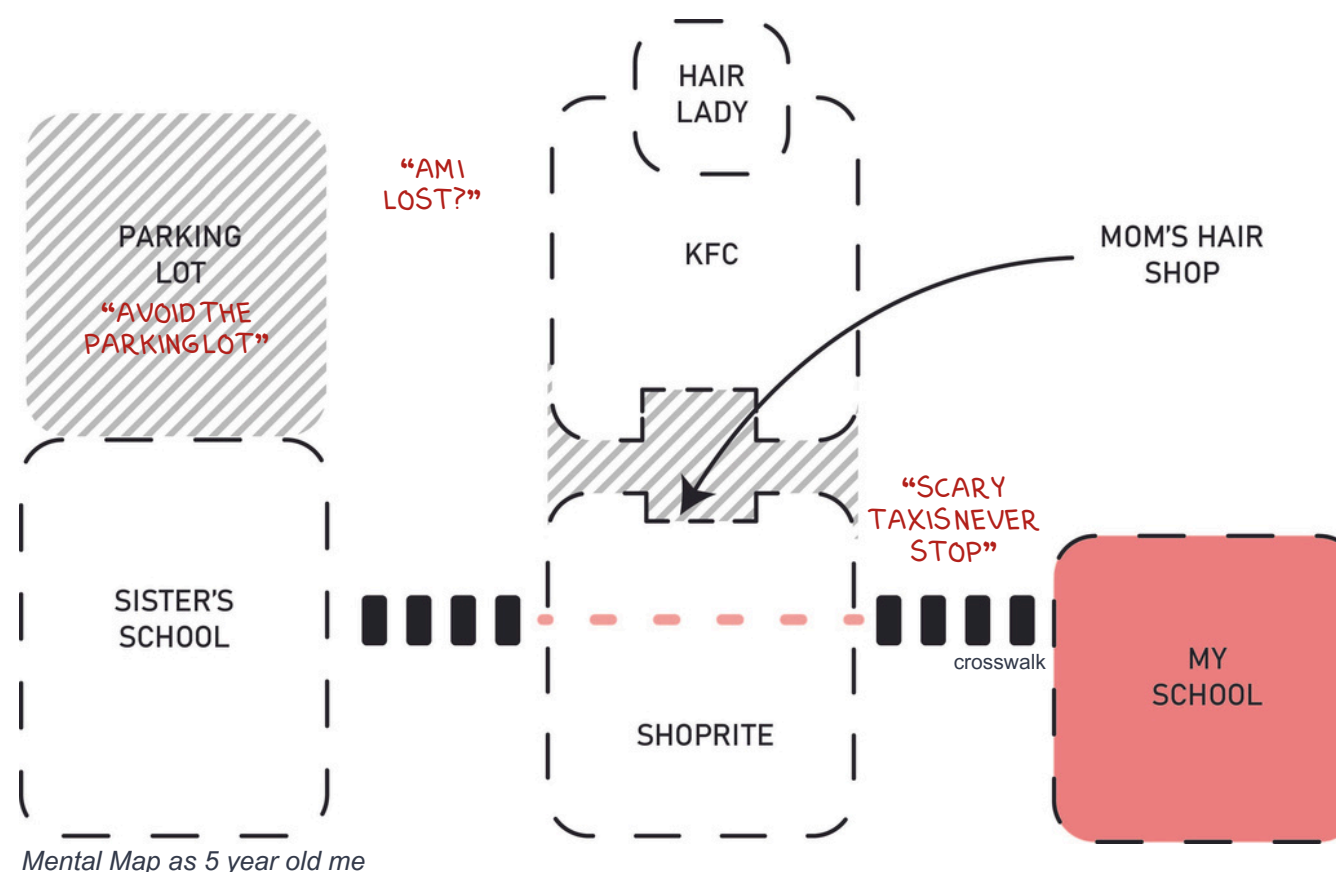
This project was inspired by my mother's hair shop and salon in the Windhoek CBD. As a very business-oriented woman, my mother has had a small hair shop and salon in a little alleyway in the Windhoek CBD since March 2001. For the last two decades, Monday to Saturday, she travels to Town to open up her shop and sell her hair products. I would watch her set up as early as seven in the morning while I cut up magazines in the corner, before walking to my Kindergarten on the other side of Town. Organising the wigs and hairsprays, the cha-ching from the cash register signalling that she was ready and it was time for me to leave for school. The sound of taxis hooting and the pungent smell of cigarettes from the sports bars filled the air. *Town* was an embodiment of opportunities for everyday Namibians. People gather around the robots, crossing as one big flock. Random aunties grab my little five-year-old hand making sure I safely cross the road.

Sadly, over the years, the hair shop had been struggling to sustain itself. My mother tried everything. From offering discounts or learning how to use Instagram to attract more potential customers. The high rental costs forced her shop out of her little alleyway where all her customers knew where to find her, into a much quieter corner in the CBD. Here, she's been faced with petty theft and competition with other hair shops. While her small hair shop struggled to stand out in this new environment, she remains convinced that Town is the best place to be for her business.



As I got older, being exposed to different groups of people in the diverse Namibia made me imagine that Town would become a creative and localised scene. As adaptive people in an environment that struggles to reflect the diverse and innovative Namibian spirit. After the Coronavirus pandemic, it became evident that small businesses and local entrepreneurs will find a way to adapt and overcome any adversaries that they are faced with. I hope that through this research, I can advocate for the smallest of businesses in the little alleyways and bring more opportunity and life back into the CBD.

Before a city can rise, it needs a solid foundation. 'Laying the Groundwork' in this chapter does not just refer to laying bricks and mortar, but rather the laying down of ideas that will reshape the Central Business District (CBD) of Windhoek, known by Namibians as Town. Town must be shaped into something alive, that breathes into and adapts to the Namibian people's vision, creativity and adaptability. We envision the transformation of the public realm that nurtures economic sustainability and social interactions that align with the future of the city.



Mental Map as 5 year old me



Images of my mother's shop in an alleyway along Independence Avenue

LET'S BRING OUR CITY BACK TO LIFE

1. We strive to revitalise our communities, transforming decayed urban areas into vibrant hubs for economy and connection.
2. We are committed to regenerating our environment, reclaiming vacant lands and restoring balance to ecosystems over and underutilised by human activity.
3. We seek to renew the human spirit, fostering a sense of purpose in economic and community spaces in all who join our cause.

Research methods manifesto



"The manifesto was an exercise that guided me towards my research question and objectives."



#Educate_and_empower
#Collaborate_and_mobilise
#Create_and_innovate

RESEARCH QUESTION

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC REALM SUSTAIN THE LOCAL ECONOMY?

public space, public transport & public facilities

SMMEs, local businesses, entrepreneurs

keep it alive now and for the future

1. What is the cause and effect of the underutilisation of the CBD on the public realm and the local economy?
2. Which types of economic activities have the most potential to thrive in the CBD's public spaces?
3. How can the public realm better support local businesses and economic activity?

OBJECTIVES

1

To understand the **evolution of the urban context** and existing city structure of the CBD as a crucial driver for economic development.

2

To identify different **spatial strategies and interventions** for CBD regeneration by looking at existing projects and theoretical papers.

3

To **spatially assess the current state** of the built form, public realm and economic landscape within the Windhoek CBD.

4

To develop and **propose spatial design interventions** and strategies to enable and sustain local economic development in the CBD.

METHODOLOGY

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ECONOMY AND THE PUBLIC REALM

• CRITICAL THEORY ANALYSIS

- Theories of spatial justice to understand the importance of equity and the fair distribution of economic opportunities in the Windhoek CBD.
- Urban design concepts like placemaking, and human-centred design to understand the relationship between urban design concepts and the economy.
- Economic theories like cluster theory, central place theory etc to understand the relationship between and within economies.

• DESKTOP ANALYSIS

- Land uses within the Windhoek CBD to understand their relationship between the public realm and the economic landscape, using Google Earth, Google Maps, QGIS and OpenStreetMaps.
- Mapping all the businesses and noting how long they have been there and if they were local or a franchise, through Google Earth, Google Maps and social media apps.
- The evolution of the Windhoek CBD to note the changes and its importance to the public realm over the years, through images and social media.
- Policy analysis of existing proposed strategies, plans and development of Windhoek through the Smart City Initiative, Non-Motorised Plan and the drafted Spatial Development Framework.

• OBSERVATION

- Through Rhythm analysis of the Windhoek CBD in the morning, afternoon and evening, Monday to Sunday, to understand dynamic patterns and activities that shape the economic realm in the CBD. For example, how business owners operate their target markets.
- Streetscape analysis of the Windhoek CBD through a series of photographic documentation and spatial mapping to identify key design elements and pedestrian infrastructure.
- In the Windhoek CBD, mapping all the businesses and noting how long they have been there and if they were local or a franchise.

• INTERVIEWS

- Random interviews with SMMEs and informal traders to understand their challenges and economic prospects.
- Interview with a City of Windhoek official to understand the prospects of the City of Windhoek on the CBD.
- An online questionnaire was sent to Namibia University of Science and Science and Technology students to understand perceptions and influence on the Windhoek CBD.
- and residents of an
- An online questionnaire was sent to residents of 77 on Independence (residential buildings) to understand their perceptions and influence on the Windhoek CBD.
- Assessing the growth and history of Independence Avenue to understand the evolution within the CBD over the years.

Overall, these methodologies helped to gain a better understanding of the economic landscape and public realm in the Windhoek CBD.

RESPONDENTS NOTED

- *Pedestrians struggle to get to the CBD because it is too expensive, paying anywhere from N\$13.00 to N\$52.00 for one trip.*
- *Pedestrians prefer the convenience and safety of shopping malls.*
- *There is a lack of variety in the CBD.*
- *The struggle of high parking fees and lack of parking.*
- *They would love to live in the CBD if there were affordable housing options.*
- *There is a lack of interactive spaces that engage the public.*
- *The majority barely visit the CBD after 17h00.*
- *There are no spaces for future entrepreneurs or young artists to foster ideas or collaborate.*
- *Business owners struggle with high rental costs and complicated procedures to start a business.*
- *Business owners would be willing to keep their businesses open later if there were more street activities.*

RELEVANCE

Relevance of the project

This research project is significant for several reasons. Firstly, as a postcolonial city, it is important to explore Windhoek's cultural identity and heritage, promote social justice and equity, and combat the contemporary challenges of urbanisation and globalisation in the local economic context. Secondly, the City of Windhoek Municipality has been working towards improving the Windhoek CBD. For example, the Non-Motorised Transport Plan (See Annexure A) seeks to create a less car-dominated city by 2032. This plan illustrates how Independence Avenue will be prioritised as a pedestrian-friendly street in the Windhoek CBD. Additionally, there have been developments to revitalise the Windhoek CBD, hoping to bring it back to life. For example, the City of Windhoek Spring Markets promotes local economic development by closing off a portion of Independence Avenue for temporary markets and stalls. Additionally, upgrading the entrance to Post Street Mall to encourage more foot traffic. Lastly, this research project promotes Sustainable Development Goals 8, 9 and 11 to promote economic growth and job creation, improve livelihoods and develop sustainable infrastructure (UN-Habitat, 2015). Overall, revitalising the Windhoek CBD and promoting SMMEs will grow the local economy, sustain economic vitality and enhance the authenticity of Windhoek and Namibia.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



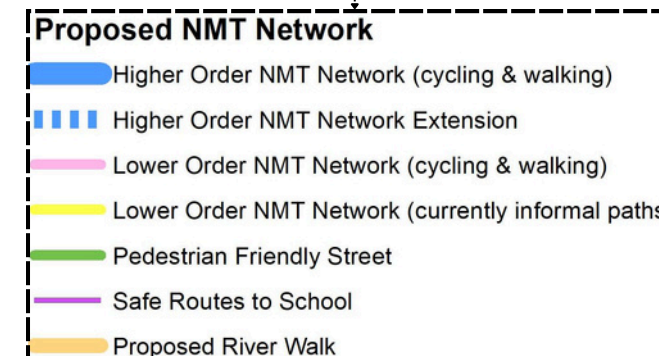
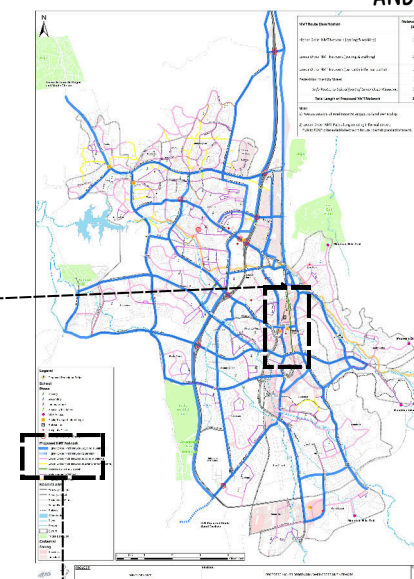
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



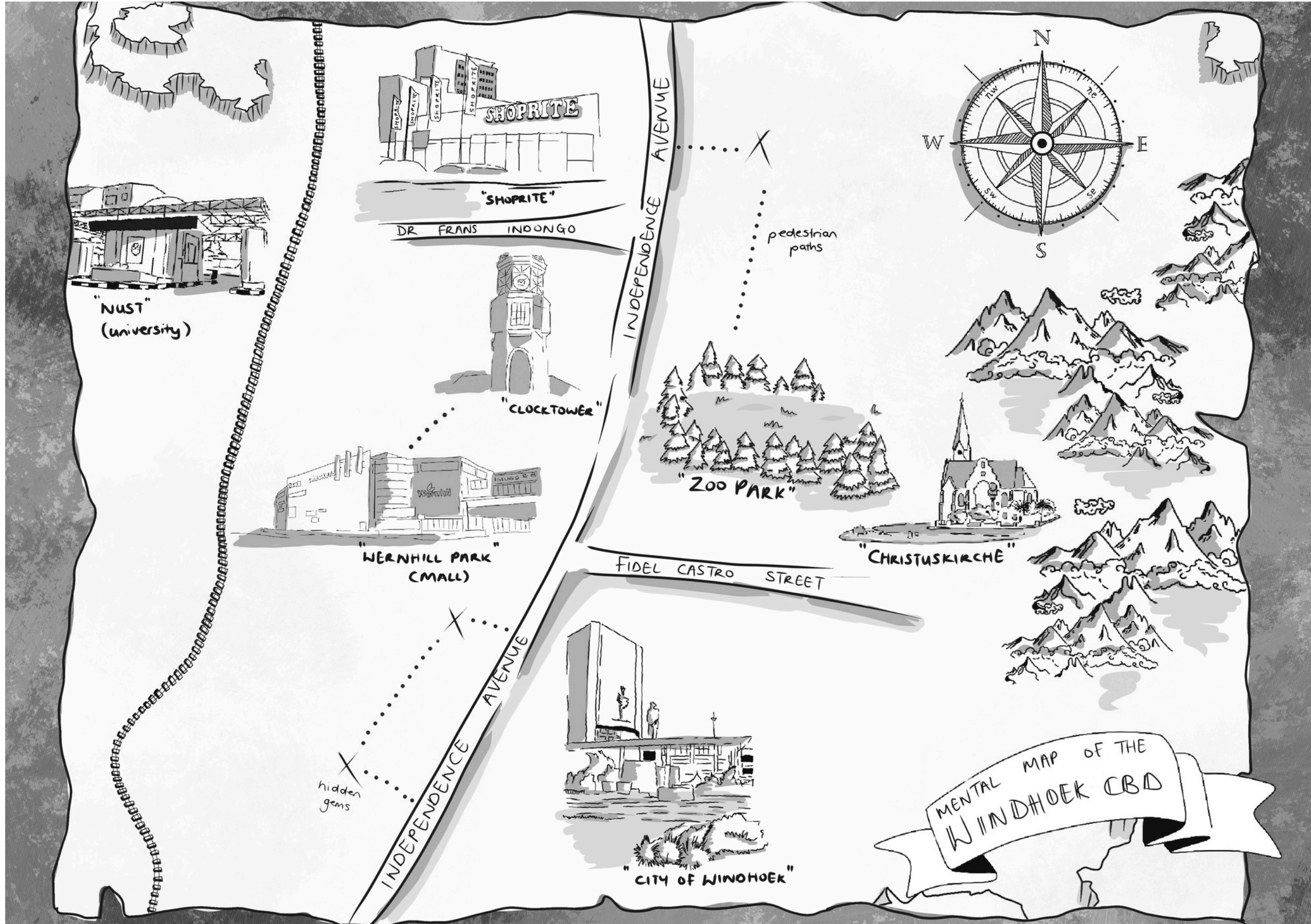
City of Windhoek Markets (author, 2022)



NMT Strategy Plan (City of Windhoek)



IMPORTANT LANDMARKS



Important landmarks in the CBD, according to pedestrian interviews

CHAPTER

2

THEORETICAL BACKBONE

INTERDEPENDENT URBAN ECONOMIES

- Spatial justice and economic equity
- Local economic development
- Economic structures in urban environments
- Precedent studies

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIES AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- Mutual reinforcement of space & economy
- The public realm as an economic catalyst
- Pedestrian experiences
- Precedent study

SUMMARY

- The need for spatial justice



This chapter will build the theoretical backbone of the research, by examining important theories and concepts that shape the project's vision towards using urban design to transform the economic landscape within the CBD. It will explore overarching theories like spatial justice, and the right to the city emphasising their importance in revitalising Central Business Districts (CBDs) in postcolonial settings. Through a critical analysis of the theories of Soja and Lefebvre, this chapter aims to offer a detailed insight into how these ideas influence the planning of urban spaces that are inclusive, accessible to pedestrians and economically viable.

INTERDEPENDENT URBAN ECONOMIES

Spatial justice and economic equity

Soja's (2010) concept of spatial justice emphasises the right of people, especially economically marginalised communities, to access and benefit from urban spaces **EQUITABLY**. Economic inclusivity in urban spaces, like enabling local SMMEs, contributes to the sustainability of the CBD by supporting diverse economic activities. Urban design focuses on the socio-spatial processes that shape human settlements in their physical environment, encompassing all its problems and complexities. Landman (2021) describes a three-step process for decolonisation. The first step is to remember: sensitively dealing with the past by removing oppressive symbols and celebrating new, more meaningful events. The second step is to reimagine the future and project various possibilities. The third step is to transform by transcending the differences and attempting to renew public spaces through inclusivity. The public realm must decolonise and reclamation, as all citizens have the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1990). These approaches must be community-led and promote **ACCESSIBILITY** and **INCLUSIVITY** for all types of people. This can be achieved through affordable housing and transport options, activating public spaces with local art and culture, and public facilities that serve the whole community, with a focus on underserved areas. The inclusive design would create accessible focal points like public squares, markets, or promenades where local businesses can operate on equal footing with larger enterprises. It also involves enhancing the connectivity between different parts of the city to prevent the isolation of marginalised economies. In her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jacobs emphasises the importance of designing cities for people, not just economic transactions.

Local economic development

The aim of Local Economic Development (LED) is to enhance the economic potential of a local area to improve its economic prospects and improve livelihoods for all. It involves collaboration between public, private and NGOs to improve conditions for economic growth and create job opportunities (Swinburn et al., 2006). This involves investment into the area, increasing productivity and competitiveness for local businesses, entrepreneurs and workers. Every community has a unique culture that either enhances or reduces the potential for LED. This then determines its ability to attract generate and retain investment. LED is a response to municipal governments realising that businesses and capital were moving between locations for a competitive advantage. By actively reviewing their economic base, communities gain an understanding of the potential and obstacles to growth and investment.

Bell and Jayne (2003) discuss 'the culture of design' to create an environment of entrepreneurialism, innovation and creativity. These are attractive not only to investors but also to other creative people. Design-led urban regeneration can be focused on architecture and urban planning to create physical and symbolic conditions to attract activity. Creative industries with their focus on aesthetics, consumer marketing and advertising can contribute to an environment of creativity that is symbolic of the economic profiles of CBDs (Bell and Jayne, 2003). Local authorities and business support agencies must champion SMME development.

Regenerated CBDs must adapt to residential demands, barrier-free access, and reduce the maintenance costs of public spaces and facilities. Design elements must be adapted to current trends but also contribute to economic competition within CBDs through new consumption habits and options (Altrock, 2017). Furthermore, there will need to be a reassessment of the allocation of responsibilities between the local authority and private owners when playing their part in regeneration.

Urban regeneration is all the interventions in the built, urban environment that go beyond the ongoing maintenance and regeneration of buildings and public spaces by their respective owners (Altrock, 2017). Moreover, it is a comprehensive vision that aims to address the issues in cities and make lasting enhancements to the economic, physical, social and environmental aspects of a developing area.

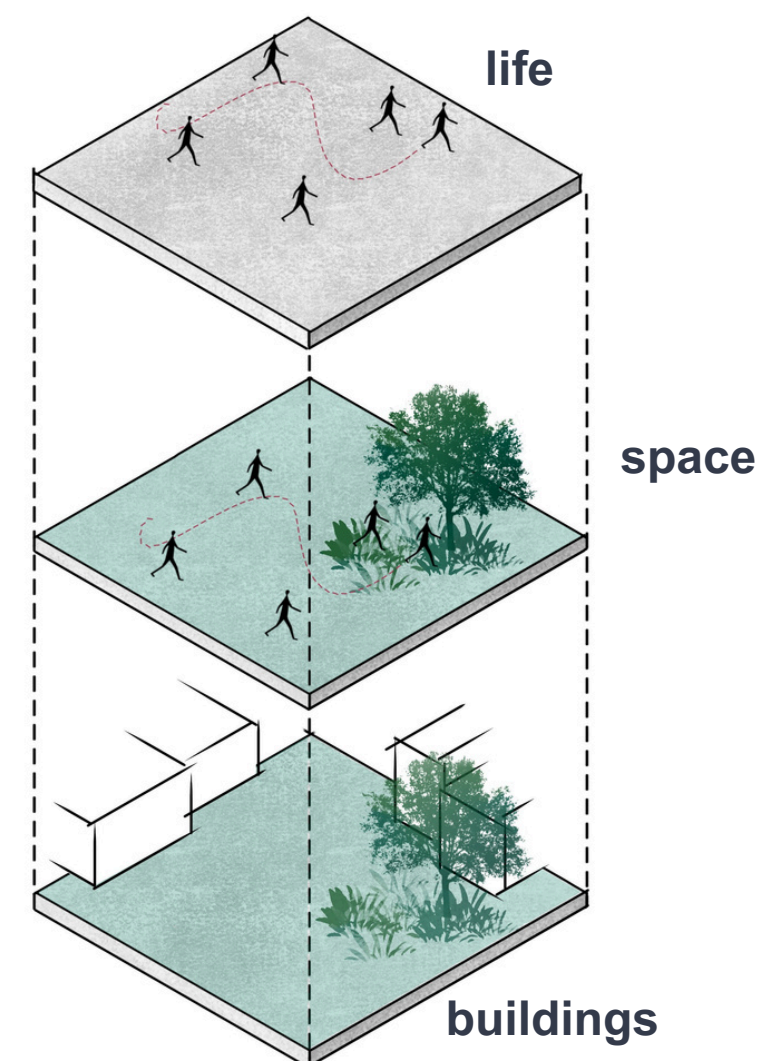


Diagram showing relationship between life, space and buildings

Key takeaways:

- A hub of innovation, entrepreneurialism and creativity must be fostered to promote and sustain SMMEs.

INTERDEPENDENT URBAN ECONOMIES

Economic structures in urban environments

Cities are economic hubs where Central Business Districts (CBDs) historically act as centres of commerce, trade, and social interactions. Harvey's (1989) theories on the production of space argue that economic forces shape urban spaces, both in their spatial layout and social uses. Therefore, the CBD's vitality directly influences the city's economic well-being. Christaller's (1933) central place theory describes a market area in a spatial context, regarding its distribution patterns, size, and how settlements are distributed, functioning as nodes for the distribution of goods and services. A certain threshold of people is required for a good or service to stay active, and there is a maximum distance that consumers are willing to travel to receive a good or service. In the context of small businesses, this theory can be interpreted in the CBD context that consumers will purchase goods that are closest to them and highly demanded goods will be offered in **PROXIMITY**. Therefore, Christaller suggests that a mix of higher-order and lower-order services is necessary to keep an area alive. However, this theory faced several criticisms as it is an oversimplified assumption that opportunities and resources in communities are equally accessible (Berliant, 2005). The theory neither considers the complexity and **DIVERSITY** of real-life scenarios nor external factors like socio-spatial inequalities. Additionally, too rigid because it does not accommodate changes or adaptations of rapidly changing cities. Overall, the theory applies to small-scale settlements rather than more complex urban systems like postcolonial Windhoek. This has led to the development of economic theories that are more flexible and that apply to a Southern context. In his book, Principles of Economics (1890), Marshall coined the 'agglomeration theory'. Market potential can be used to describe the concentration of economies and the opportunities that can exist within and between each concentration (Lakshmanan & Hansen, 1965). This suggests that businesses cluster together to share their knowledge, resources, and skilled labour. As a result, this sharing of resources has a higher input of productivity but is also a cluster for innovation (Karlsson, 2010).

PRECEDENT STUDY Maboneng Precinct, Johannesburg, South Africa



Maboneng Precinct Ground floor activation;
<https://www.designindaba.com/articles/creative-work/urban-designer-alice-cabaret-innovation-challenging-places-maboneng>

Maboneng was a former industrial area that was reimaged into a vibrant urban neighbourhood with mixed-use developments. A mix of small, local businesses, art studios, and cultural venues created a vibrant example of urban renewal where residential and retail areas integrate business incubators to create a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem that attracts locals and tourists. While drawing foot traffic, this strategy also fosters the expansion of small and creative enterprises, combining community involvement with economic vitality. By prioritising the public realm by improving pedestrian infrastructure, and creating co-working spaces, maker spaces, business incubators and cultural or artistic hubs, Maboneng was able to transform its local economic development



Maboneng Precinct Ground floor activation

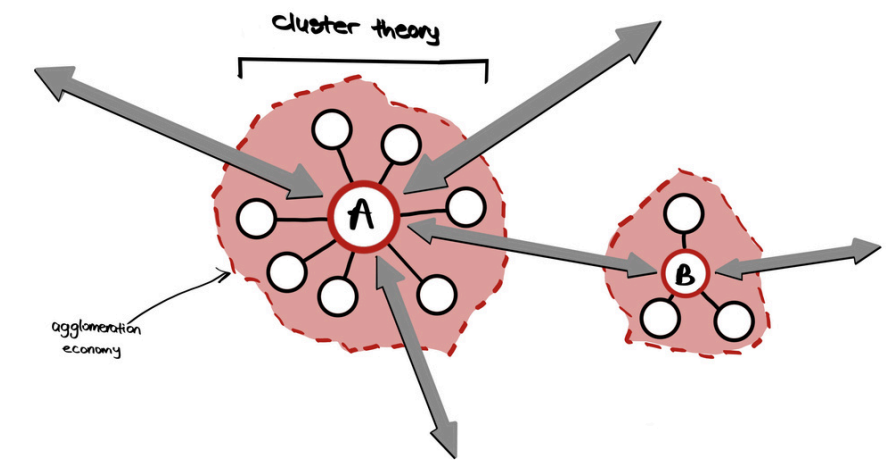


Diagram showing cluster relationships (author)

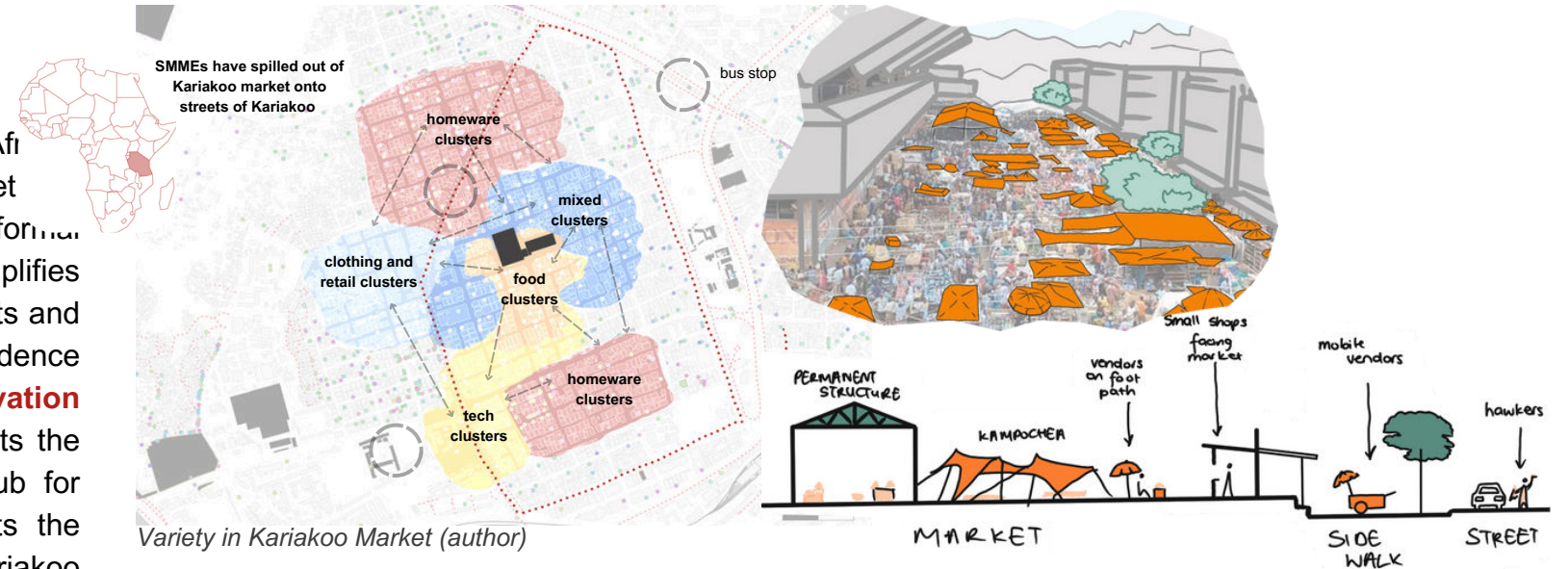
Key takeaways:

- By clustering businesses that are intra- and interrelated and linked, they can work together, create a competitive environment, attract investment, grow other sectors and overall enhance the quality of the public realm.

PRECEDENT STUDY

Kariakoo Market, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

Kariakoo Market in illustrates how economic theories manifest in a postcolonial Afri context. As a vibrant and historically significant market district, the Kariakoo market evolved from colonialism into a thriving economy. The dynamism of SMMEs and informal traders creates a synergistic environment when clustered together. The market exemplifies the concept of competitive advantage where traders specialise in a **variety** of products and services, creating a rich array for local consumers and tourists. This interdependence fosters competition and **adaptability**, as the **proximity** of traders encourages **innovation** and product differentiation. As one of the largest markets in East Africa, it highlights the principle of economic **diversity**, supplying the local community, as well as a hub for competitive and entrepreneurial creativity. Moreover, the Kariakoo market reflects the market **efficiency** and benefits of specialisation and how the local economy of Kariakoo continues to evolve and sustain a competitive edge.



Main Road, Cape Town, South Africa


This case study analysis is for the portion from Rondebosch to Observatory, Cape Town. A postcolonial city, initially developed to facilitate transport and trade, Main Road is lined with various commercial, residential and industrial developments. While Main Road could still use some improvements to improve its pedestrian safety, through raised pedestrian crosswalks at intersections and overhangs and trees to protect from the sun, it is an excellent example of a linear major economic strip that sustains pedestrian movement for businesses.

- The Old Biscuit Mill Bus stops are located along Main Road which is heavily trafficked by MyCiTi buses, minibus taxis and UCT shuttles transporting students.
- Fast-food chains like KFC and Mcdonald's foster activity at night providing food at late hours, job opportunities for local youth and promoting visibility on the street. This can be an anchor point along Main Road that invites activity and increases foot traffic with other businesses. It can be paired with a transport interchange and student housing.
- Main Road is a major attraction for pedestrians, promoting walkability by offering attractive economic activities like restaurants and corner shops.

Lower Main Road in Observatory is an example of how history working-class areas have been regenerated and transformed into trendy markets, thrift stores, restaurants and creative studios. Lower Main Road has more local South African businesses and entrepreneurship fostering a youthful and creative culture. This street's unique charm, lies in its mix of old and new businesses, with long-standing family-owned stores coexisting with trendy eateries, bars and coworking spaces. Offering student housing and merging the public realm and the local economy.



1. Student housing on top floors.
2. Overhangs onto the street serve as shelter from rain and hot sun.
3. Restaurants encroach onto the street.
4. Essential and anchor services that encourage pedestrian activity.
5. Restaurant windows open onto the street.
6. Narrow roads that create an intimate feel and slow down traffic.



“For the duration of my studies, I lived along Main Road in Cape Town and there were specific spatial key informants I noticed walking home everyday.”

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIES AND THE PUBLIC REALM

Mutual reinforcement of space & economy

Lefebvre's (1991) Right to the City concept suggests that people have the right to shape their urban space, which can be achieved by fostering an economy that reflects local needs and cultural identities. This interplay between space and economy emphasises that when economies thrive, public spaces are better maintained and utilised. Thus, creating a feedback loop where one enhances the other.

Placemaking is a community-led process that aims to transform public spaces into vibrant and meaningful places that promote social connection, community engagement and economic vitality. It involves a collaborative approach to designing and managing public spaces, taking into account the unique character, needs and aspirations of the surrounding community. Placemaking fosters social connections and community pride, supports local economic development, enhances the physical environment and aesthetics, promotes cultural and artistic expression, encourages civic engagement and social activism and celebrates the unique history and identity of the place.

Gehl (2011) highlights how well-designed public spaces can encourage pedestrian activity, thus benefitting local businesses and fostering a sense of place. Public spaces act as "living rooms" where people gather, creating a vibrant atmosphere that fuels local economic growth. This underscores the importance of a well-designed public realm in sustaining economic vibrancy and life. Jacobs (1961) argues how lively public spaces can foster social interactions and business opportunities like vendors or even pop-up markets etc. This interaction between the public realm and local economies emphasises that a thriving public realm can enable local economic growth for SMMEs.

Engaging the public with the local economy involves creating spaces which encourage people to linger.

The public realm as an economic catalyst

The public realm refers to all accessible areas, including parks and recreation areas, transportation systems, utilities and public buildings. It encompasses the physical environment and infrastructure that supports public life. The public realm is an essential element to economic growth because it facilitates the movement of people and goods, supports business operations and development, enhances the quality of life by making areas more attractive to businesses and investors and provides public services and amenities that contribute to economic well being,

Public spaces are spaces where people can gather and socialise. Public spaces have acted as central meeting places for communities. From the Greek agora's to the Roman forums. Common places were always defined by a central location in a village. The development of society has resulted in certain meeting places holding less importance over others. In the pre-colonial African context, communities met in public spaces at the centre of their villages, defined by natural features like large trees. However, in the context of Owambo villages in Namibia, meeting places were defined by large camelthorn trees located near the entrance of their homestead to welcome guests into their homes. Therefore, as a society, public spaces have always fostered a sense of community. In today's context, meeting places can be defined as third places. Third places are shared or public places away from the first place (home) and second place (work) where people gather to socialise, relax and connect with others. The Industrial Revolution has proven the importance of the public realm to the newer generations. There has to be something engaging for all sorts of people. For example, cafes, parks, public libraries, bookstores etc.

According to Wyckoff (2014), the key elements that make up public places are mixed-use development, quality public spaces, access to the internet, transport and mobility options, diverse housing typologies, the preservation of history and heritage, the incorporation of arts and culture and access to recreation and green spaces. He mentions how quality places result from good building form: appropriate building mass, human-scale design and walkable neighbourhoods. Wyckoff argues that achieving this will promote safety, connectivity, accessibility, comfort and civic engagement by allowing for authentic experiences in a physical fabric where people can connect.

Key takeaways:

- Economic spaces can foster social interaction and meeting grounds for strangers to meet in public.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIES AND THE PUBLIC REALM

Pedestrian experiences

Designing CBDs that are inclusive, equitable and accessible involves creating spaces that invite pedestrian activity, thereby activating public spaces and sustaining the local economy. Drawing on Jane Jacob's *Downtown is for People* (1958) and Gordon Cullen's *The Concise Townscape* (1961), the behaviour of consumerism and pedestrian interaction can be understood through human-centred design principles. Design must focus on creating lively, human-scaled urban spaces.

A. Engaging Pedestrians through Visual and Emotional Cues

Business districts can be designed to entice more pedestrians and grab the attention of those passing through, evoking curiosity and excitement. Cullen (1961) emphasises how urban environments should manipulate emotions by offering varying experiences—cheerful, intimate, and spontaneous. He suggests that overly linear layouts become monotonous, while contrast in space and form can enhance pedestrian interest. Jacobs (1958) agrees, noting that streets with clear visual endpoints and contrasts encourage exploration. Creating focal points, such as vibrant facades, signage, and engaging window displays, can entice pedestrians to interact with the environment and the businesses within it (Claus & Claus, 2001). This visual engagement is critical for helping local businesses quickly communicate their offerings and attract customers.

B. Slowing Pedestrian Flow with Inviting Elements

Encouraging pedestrians to linger and explore fosters a vibrant public realm that benefits local businesses. In *The Image of the City*, Lynch (1960) discusses how people navigate cities and suggests using “legible” streetscapes with identifiable landmarks, pathways, and a cohesive pattern to promote a sense of familiarity. Cullen (1961) further emphasizes that sequential views and dynamic perspectives as people move through space can add to the sensory experience, creating a more interactive journey. Features like enhanced alleyways with lighting, greenery, and textured paving invite pedestrians into often-neglected areas, transforming them into vibrant hubs of activity.

C. Creating a Lasting Sense of Place

To encourage repeat visits, CBDs should foster a sense of place rooted in local culture and identity. According to Lynch (1960), cities are dynamic, constantly evolving spaces. Design should adapt to support this natural flow. For example, Jacobs (1958) suggests “careful seeding” by placing cultural activities in high-foot-traffic areas to maintain vibrancy. Diversifying activities is key when an area is limited to a single, monotonous function. By offering a mix of new and heritage buildings and ensuring spaces are active both day and night, CBDs can cater to various pedestrians and enhance community engagement.

Creating this balance will enable citizens to shape their cities, thus, ensuring that these spaces serve everyone and foster a sense of ownership and belonging within the CBD (Jacobs, 1958; Cullen, 1961).

Key takeaways:

- Visibility and accessibility of business for pedestrians
- Fostering local culture through community engagement
- Offering a variety of economic activities
- Inclusive urban design that caters to everybody

PRECEDENT STUDY

Superblocks, Barcelona, Spain

The Superblock project was implemented in 2016 and the objective was to reduce traffic congestion, pollution and noise while increasing green spaces and pedestrian-friendly areas. The concept was to divide the nine square blocks into more **manageable zones**, closing off the inside of the perimeter to through traffic so that vehicles travel around the perimeter. Inside the superblock, the **speed limit is reduced to 10 km/h**, while underground parking replaces kerbside parking. This created **more street space for markets and outdoor events** within the nine-block perimeter. This created a streetscape where pedestrians could walk around without a constant fear of cars. By prioritising pedestrians over cars, the local economy was greatly improved. Pedestrians and cyclists explore the space much slower, stopping more often to interact with businesses. Hence, the centre of social activity built on itself to enhance the public realm. This precedent study is an affective understanding of how the public realm can be reimagined to sustain the local economy.

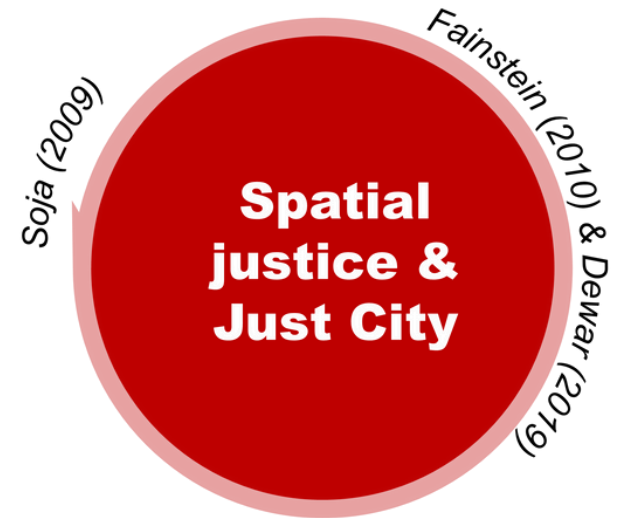


Superblocks

SUMMARY

THE NEED FOR SPATIAL JUSTICE IN THE CBD

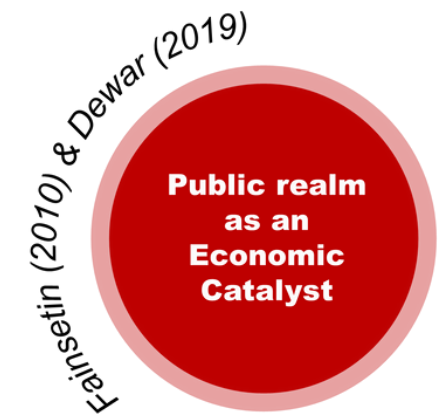
There is a need to promote spatial justice in the CBD to make the CBD more accessible for people and small businesses, to promote inclusivity and promote equitable development in Windhoek as a post colonial city.



1. Equitable
2. Accessible
3. Inclusive
4. Choice



1. Mixed-use development
2. Transit-oriented development
3. Walkability
4. Inclusion and diversity
5. Preventing placeness



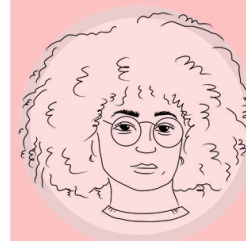
1. Triangulate: locate elements next to each other to foster activity
2. Clustering of activities to create a competitive environment, share resources etc.

- Affordable housing opportunities
- Access to economic opportunities

CHAPTER 3

AN URBAN STORY

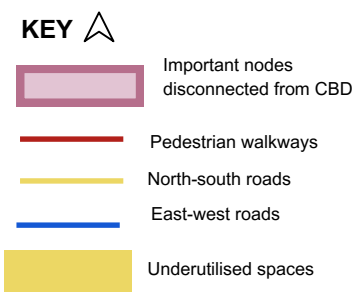
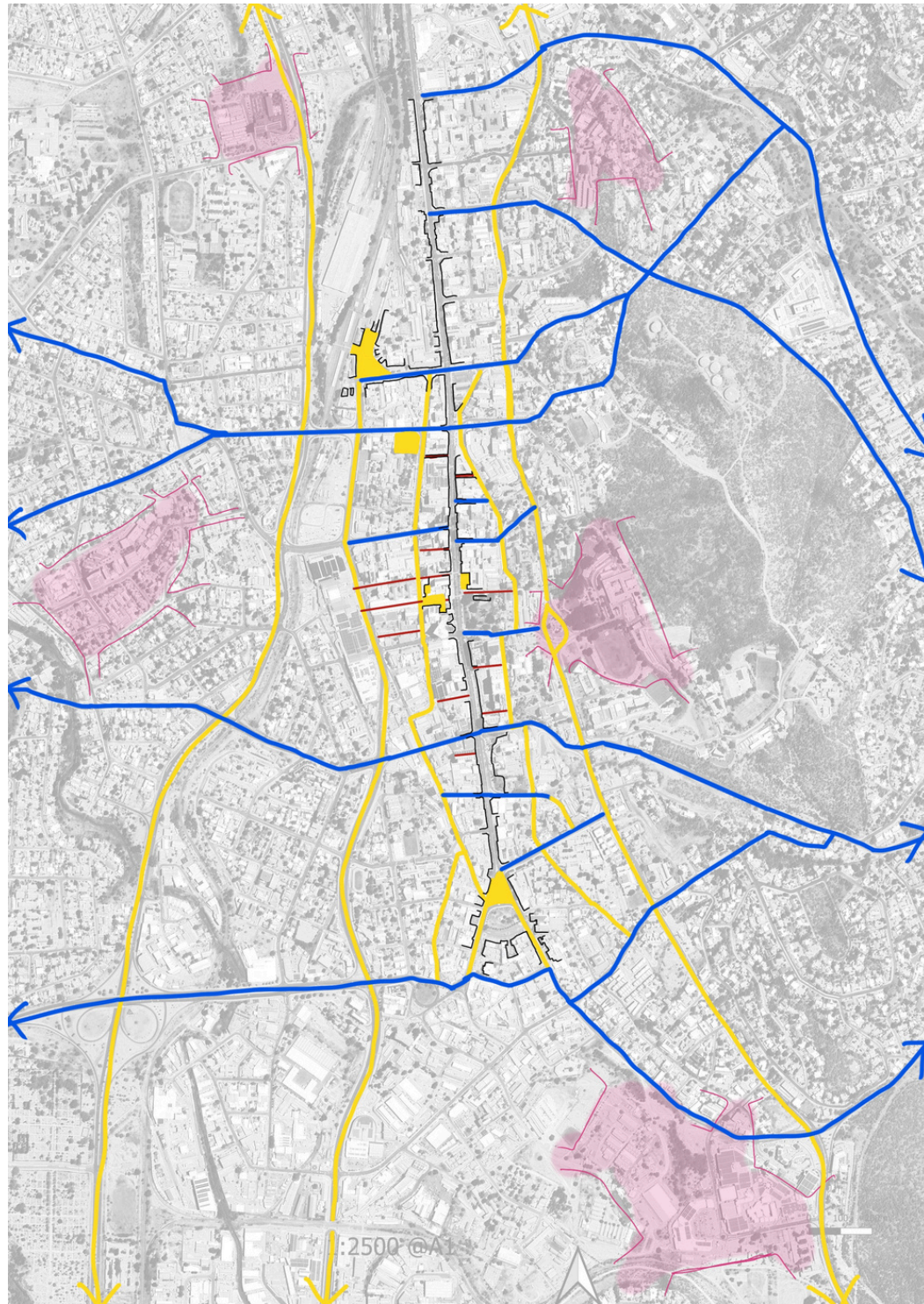
**URBAN STRUCTURE
FRAGMENTED CBD
HIDDEN GEMS: THE LOCAL
ECONOMY IN THE CBD
MOVEMENT & STREETSAPES
SPATIAL INFORMANTS**



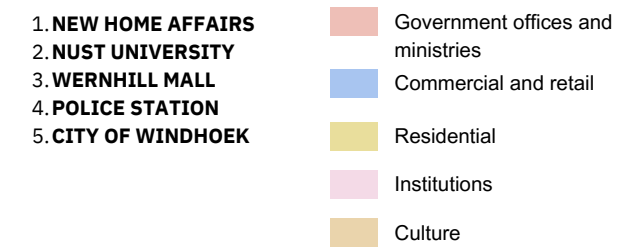
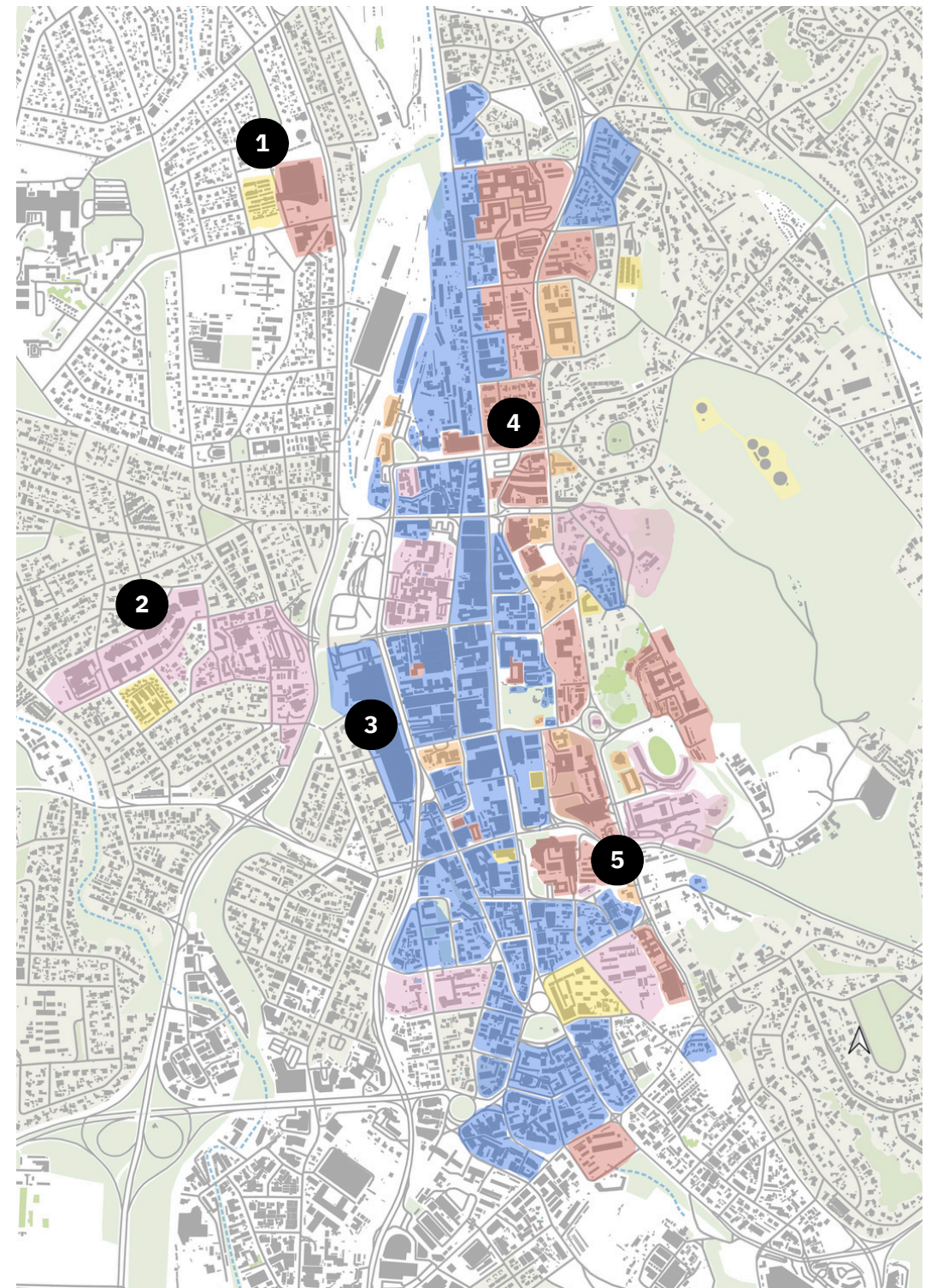
In this chapter, the results of the fieldwork based on observations, questionnaires, and mapping of economic activity along Independence Avenue in Windhoek's Central Business District (CBD). The urban environment's current condition will be investigated by examining pedestrian pathways, local business activities, and public places and spaces. With this thorough examination, our goal is to pinpoint primary obstacles and showcase possibilities for rejuvenating the CBD. The knowledge acquired will guide urban design interventions that boost economic activity and enhance the pedestrian experience on Independence Avenue.

FRAGMENTED CBD

A fragmented CBD

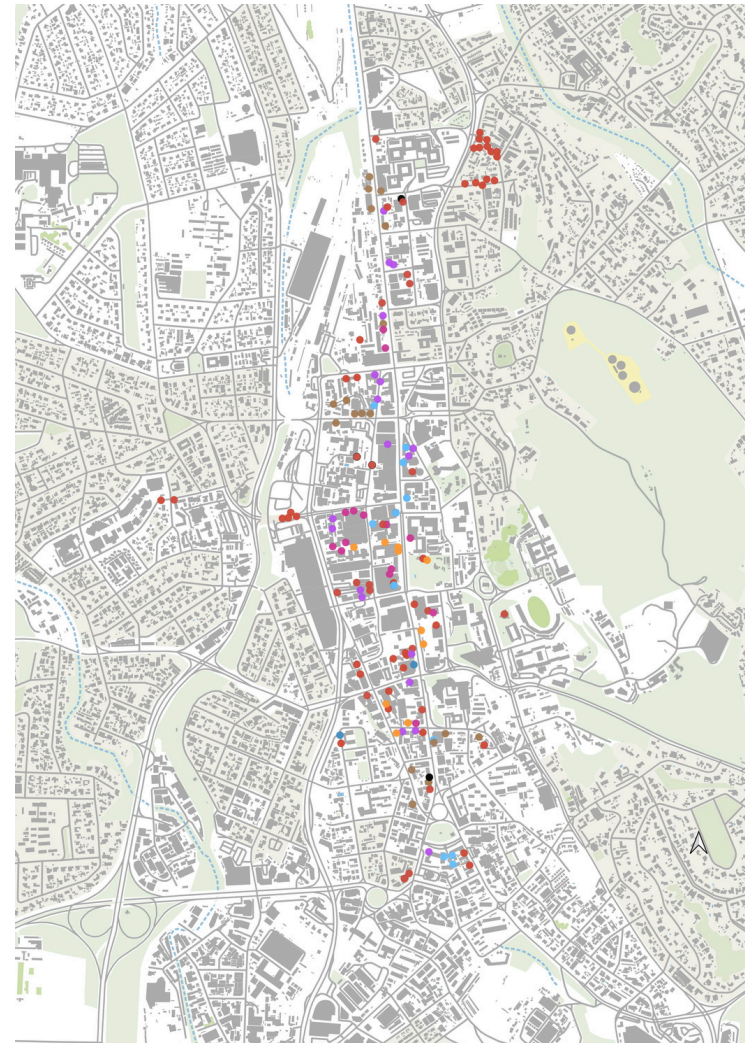


Land uses

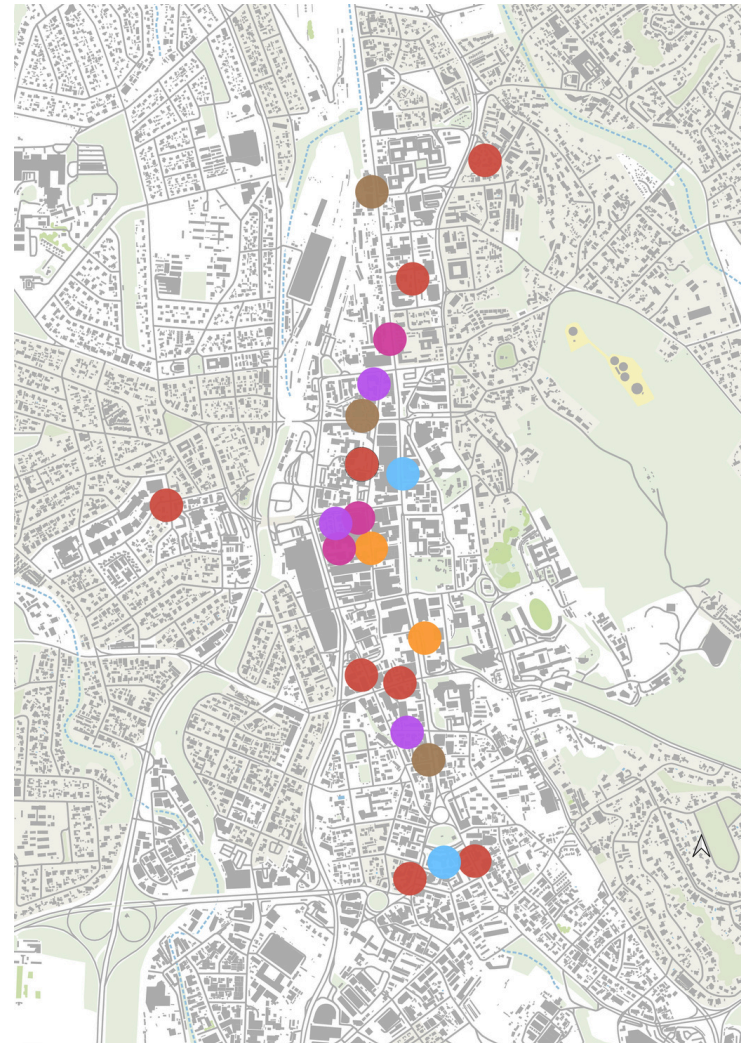


HIDDEN GEMS: THE LOCAL ECONOMY IN THE CBD

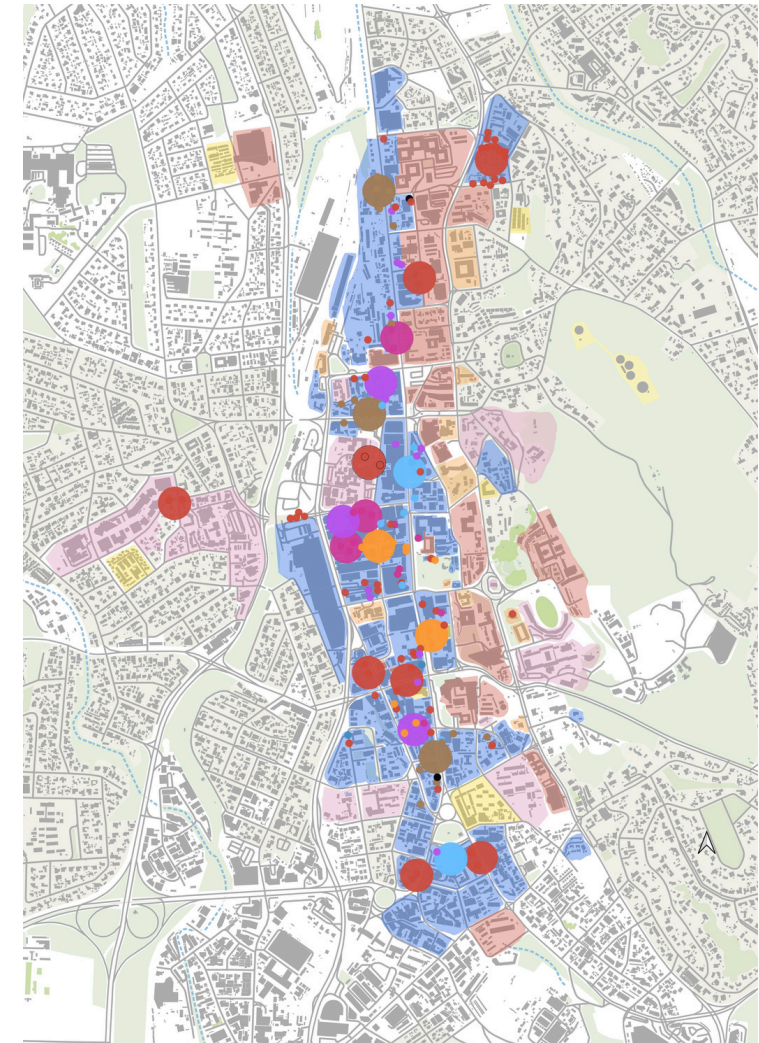
SMMEs in the Windhoek CBD



Clusters of SMMEs in the Windhoek CBD



Clusters of economy in relation to existing land uses



- Food and beverage (bars, restaurants, cafe's, food stalls)
- Retail and fashion (clothing stores, beauty shops, accessories, boutiques)
- Art and culture (galleries, craft shops, art studios, cultural centres)
- Tech and electronics (gadget shops, electronic repairs, tech services)
- Beauty and selfcare (hair salons, make-up stores and nail shops)
- Automotive and services (car dealerships, car wash, car repairs)
- Other services

- Food related cluster
- Retail and fashion related cluster
- Art and culture related cluster
- Tech and electronics related
- Beauty and selfcare related cluster
- Automotive and services related cluster

- Government offices and ministries
- Commercial and retail
- Residential
- Institutions
- Culture

HIDDEN GEMS: THE LOCAL ECONOMY IN THE CBD

The local economy has had to emerge in the fragmented cracks of the CBD as hidden gems in spaces that offer more affordable rent but lack facilities and amenities. Trying different means to stand out in an uninvited CBD. While conducting my research, I was pleasantly surprised at unexpected spaces that were lively, full of local economy and entrepreneurialism that emerged in the cracks of this fragmented CBD. These spaces fostered a sense of culture, history or local significance, emerging in the cracks of the fragmented CBD in underutilised spaces like alleyways, under bridges, on sidewalks, in less significant streets and abandoned spaces with poor infrastructure. However, these spaces remain hidden because they are tucked away, and underlooked, yet they offer valuable and memorable experiences to those who discover them. This prompted the title of my research project, and I imagined that these spaces had the potential to unlock the local culture and identity of the Windhoek CBD, creating a sense of place and revitalising the CBD. From flea markets to art murals to hair salons to interesting art cafés and bars. This made me think about my positionality in this research as since 2001, my mother has owned a hair shop in an alleyway along Independence Avenue. Growing up in that space, I got to witness the relationship that was fostered between the surrounding small businesses as they would share resources and facilities but also their struggles with high rent and a lack of safety in these spaces. However, this analysis was quite pricey regardless because there were no engaging public spaces where I could conduct my research safely and where I could sit, and observe to really understand the Windhoek CBD. This also exposed the lack of safe public spaces and streets of the Windhoek CBD.



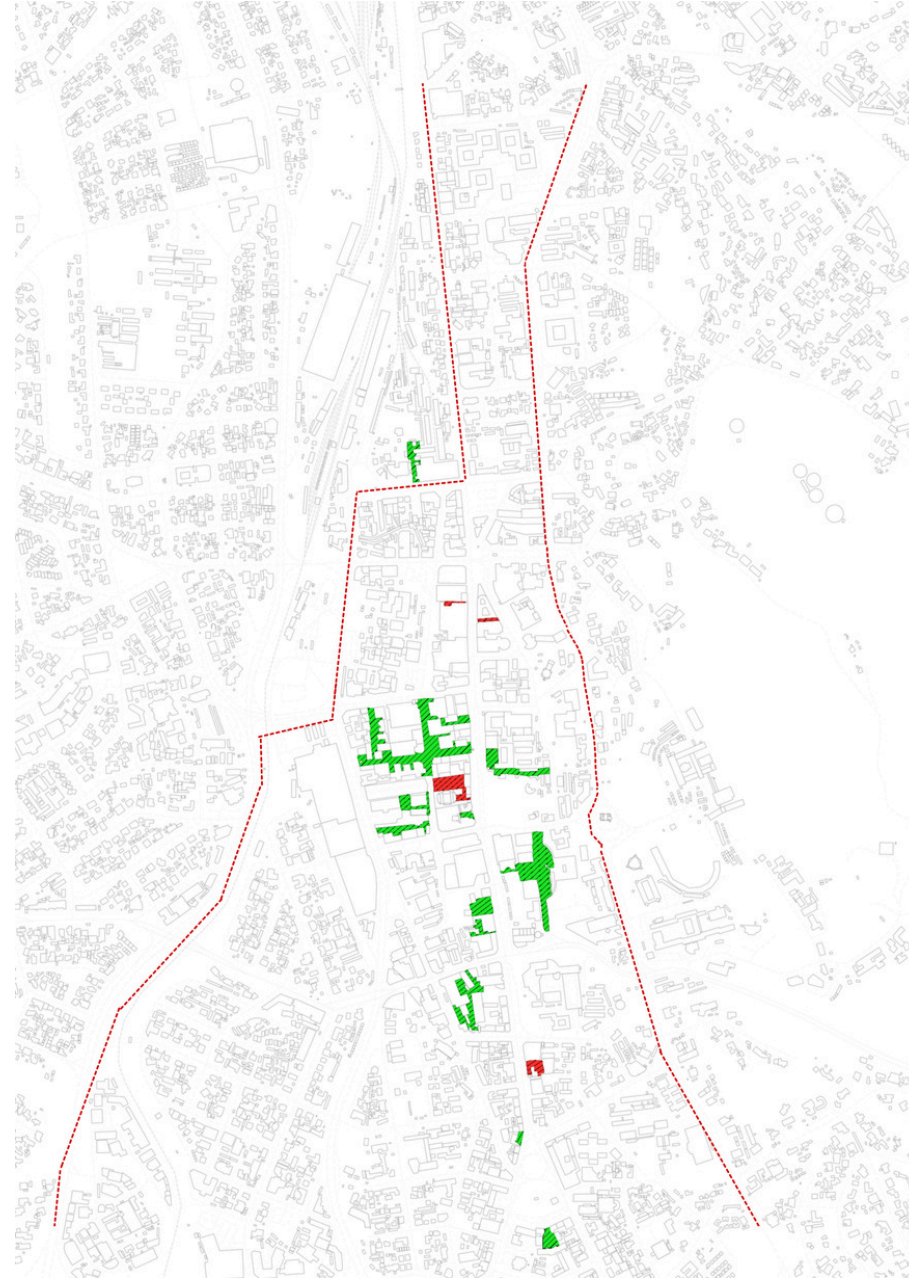
HIDDEN GEMS: THE LOCAL ECONOMY IN THE CBD



KEY



Location of hidden gems



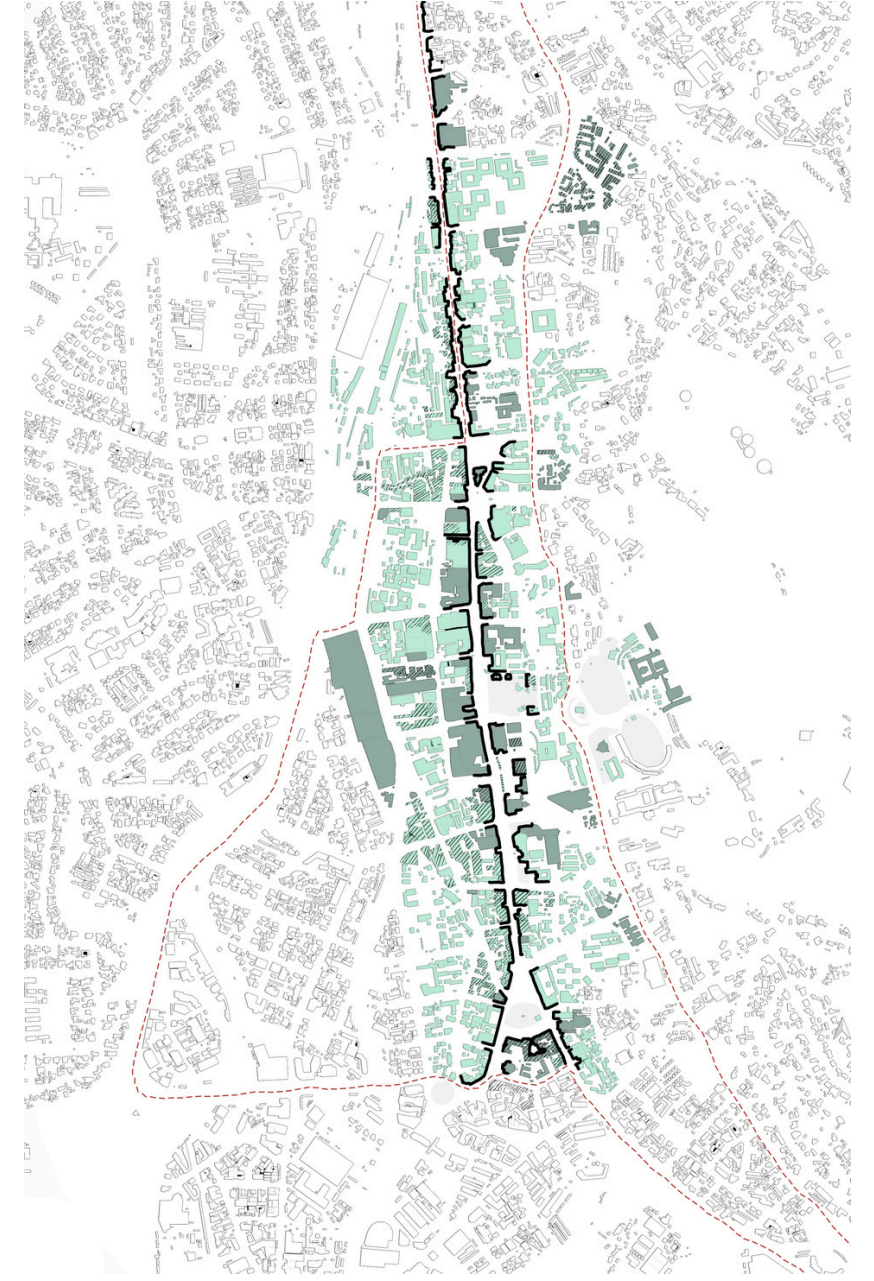
Map Key



Active spaces



Inactive spaces



KEY



Good infrastructure (upgraded within 10 years or less)



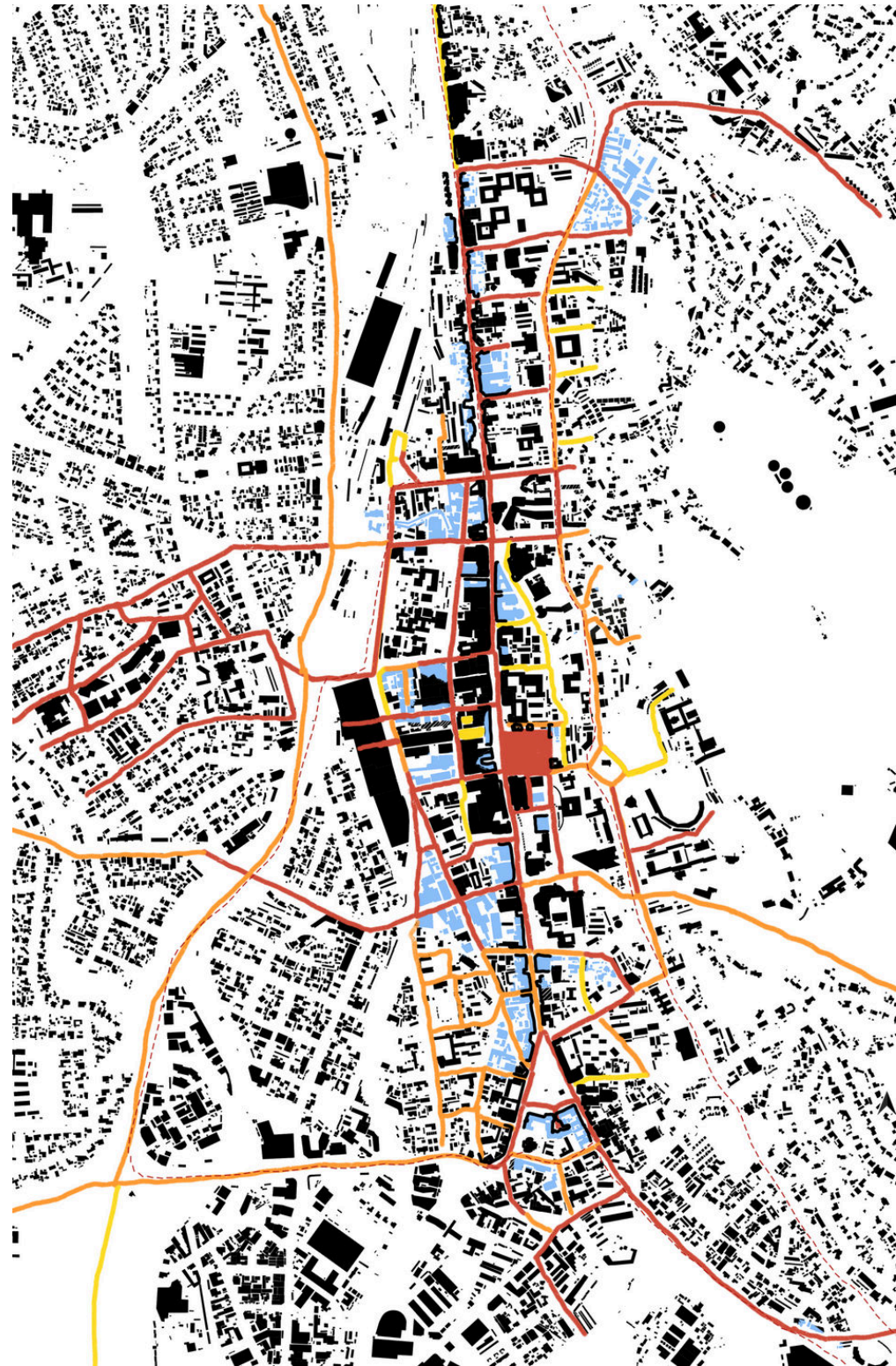
Poor infrastructure (10 years and older)



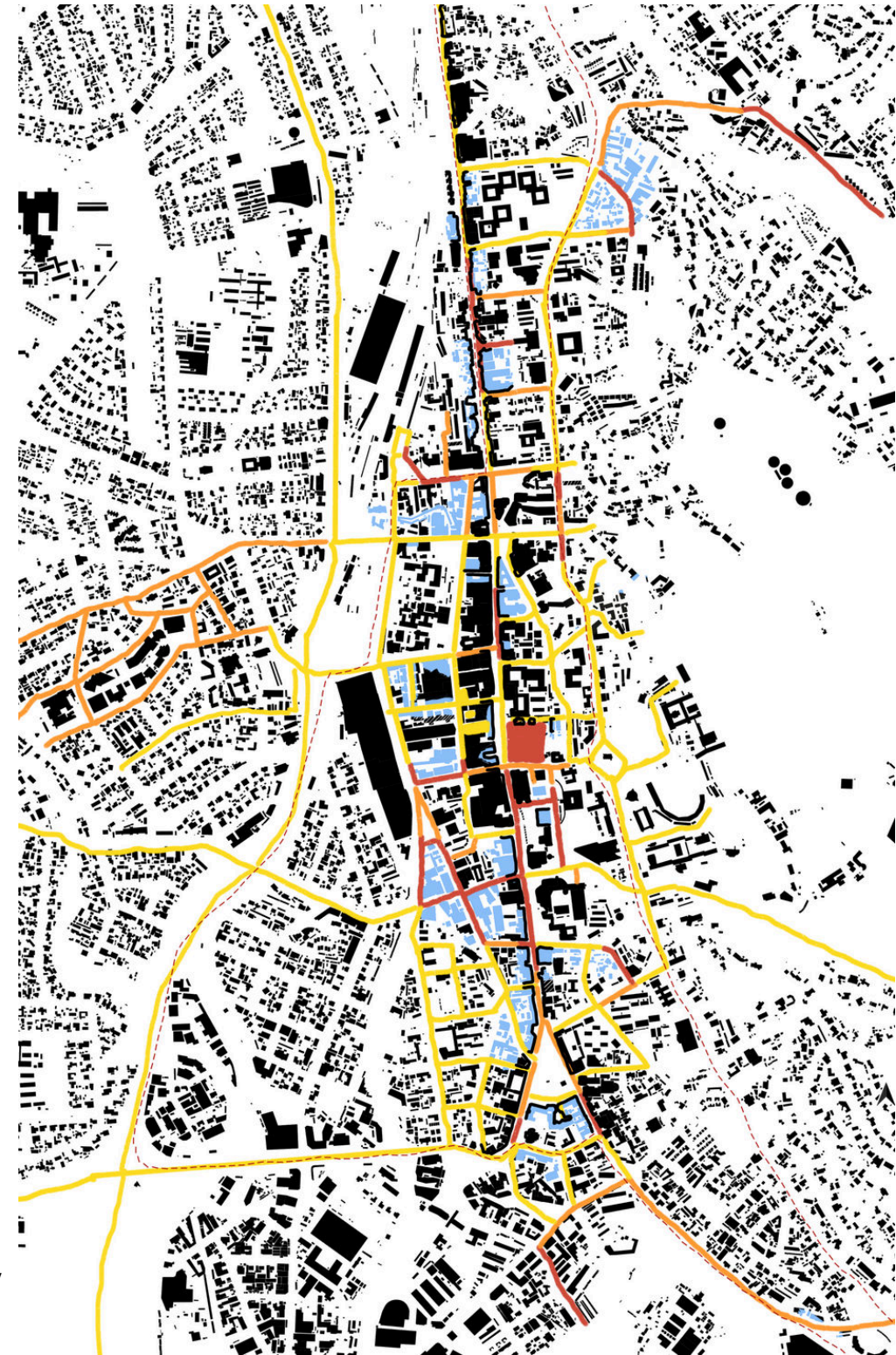
SMMEs and local businesses

MOVEMENT & STREETSCAPES




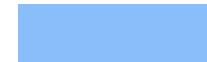
Limited access to high footfall areas
Pedestrian flow at day



Pedestrian flow at night

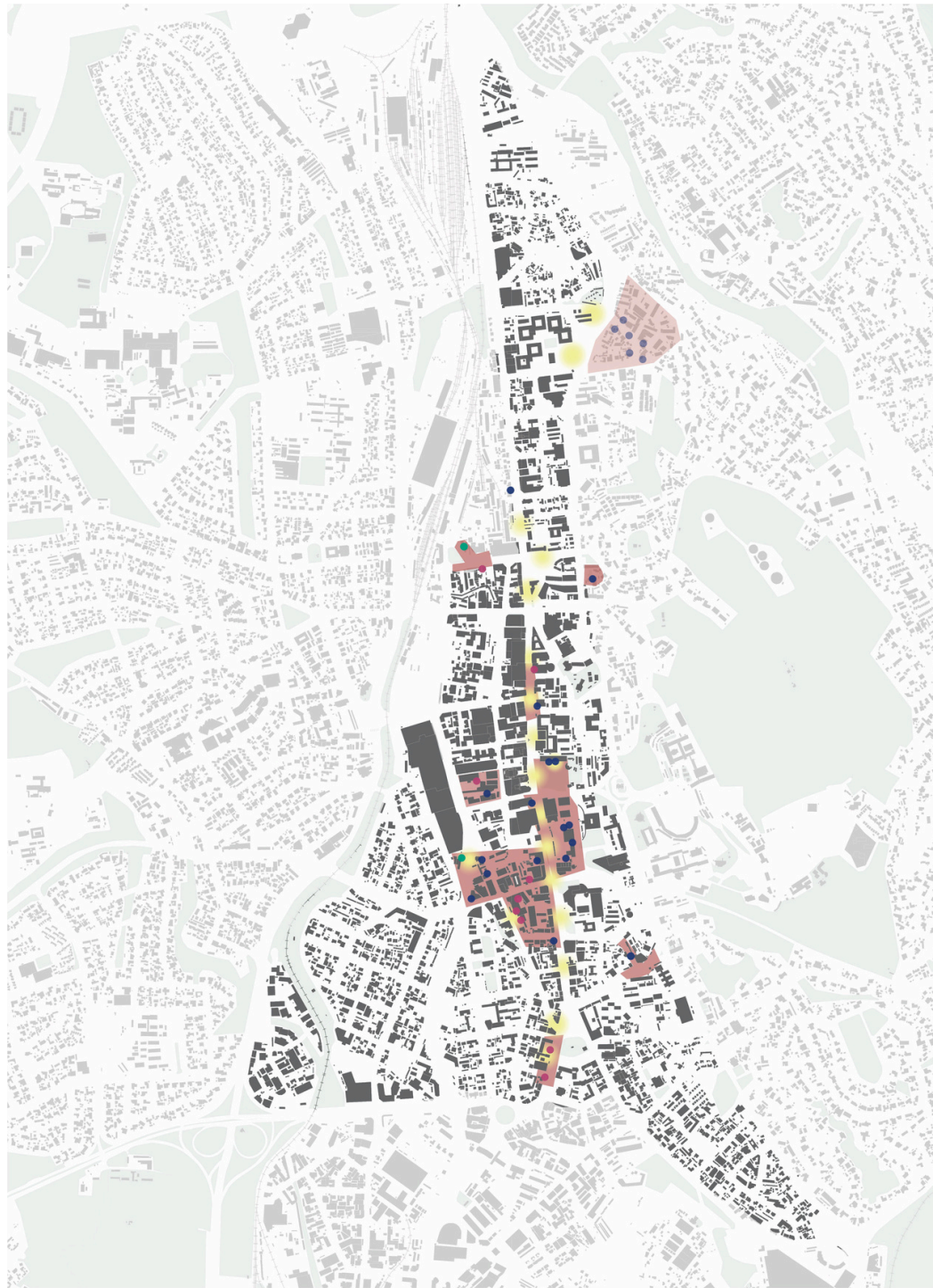


KEY 

-  High density pedestrian flow
-  Medium density pedestrian flow
-  Low density pedestrian flow
-  SMEs and local businesses

MOVEMENT & STREETSCAPES

Nighttime activity



- KEY** ▲
- Transport nodes
 - Casinos/bars
 - Restaurants
 - Very well lit areas
 - Pedestrian movement at night



In a recent newspaper article, in the Namibian newspaper, Lazarus (2024) titled Windhoek 'a sleepy town during the evening'. He states how compared to other cities worldwide, the Windhoek CBD falls fast asleep between 5 and 7 pm. One of the respondents mentioned that if there were more potential customers at night, they would happily trade longer into the night.

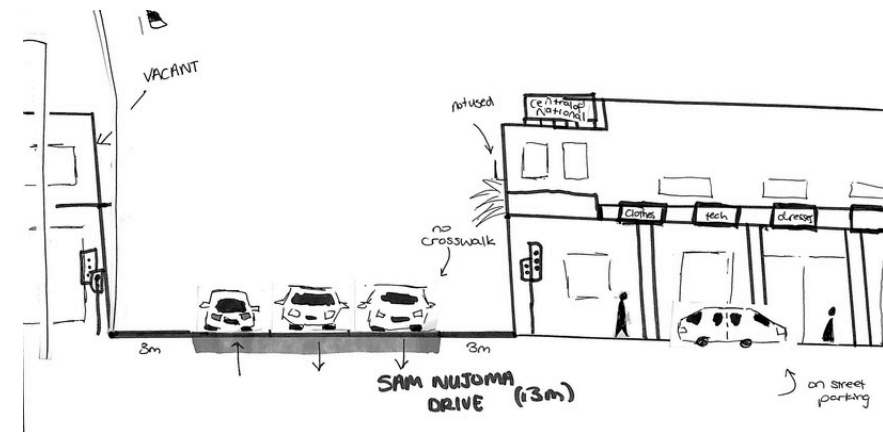
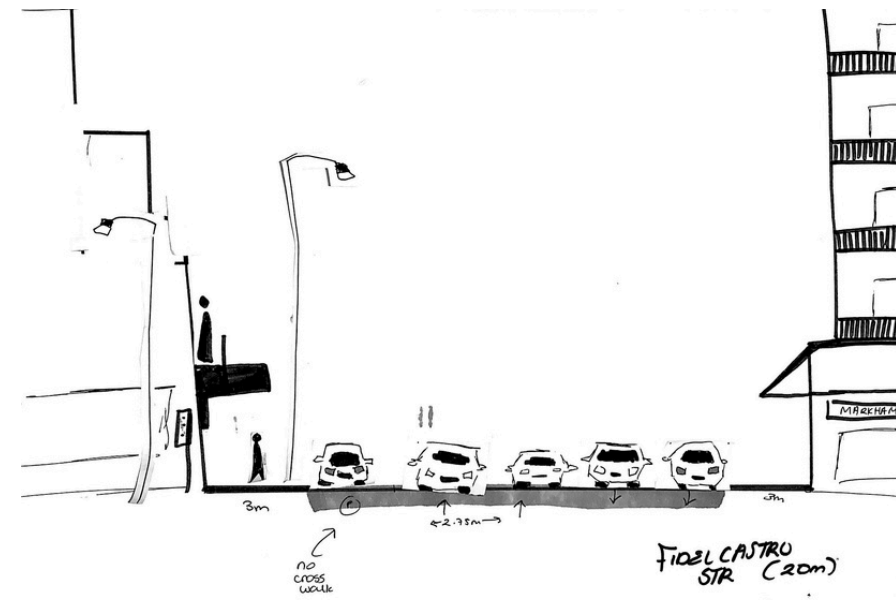
While the CBD is well-lit, much of the lighting illuminating the CBD comes from building signage, streetlights, storefront displays and vehicles travelling through the CBD. There is a lack of nighttime activities that attract pedestrians at night.

MOVEMENT & STREETSCAPES

There was a lack of relationship between the east-west streets of the CBD, all acting in isolation from one another, so there was no connectivity of the streetscape and there was nothing holding the CBD together besides the physical road infrastructure and buildings. This leads to a lack of safety in streets around the CBD.



Safety

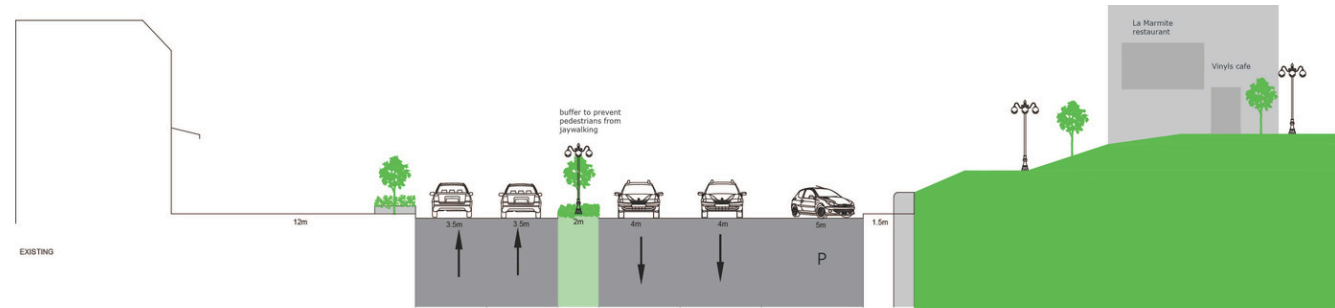


- KEY
- Unsafe areas
 - Safe areas
 - SMMEs and local businesses

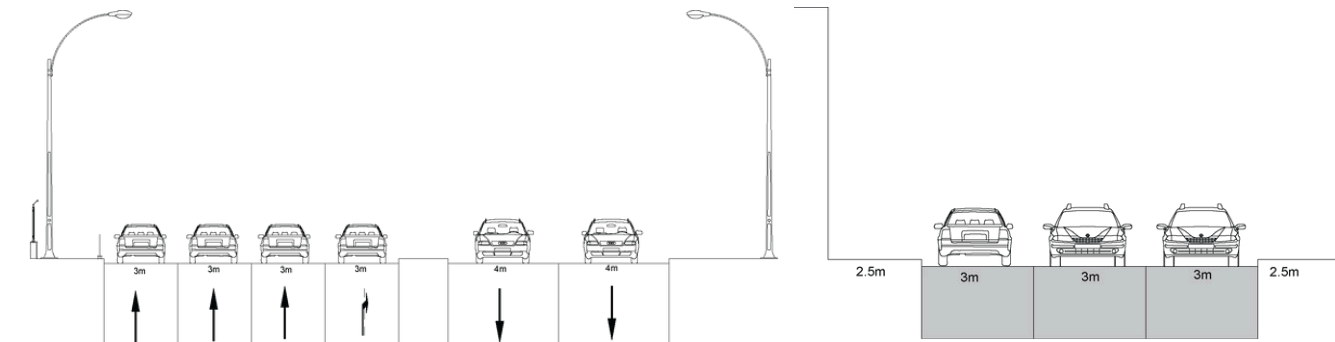
MOVEMENT & STREETSCAPES

Climatology

The sun path map indicates that the sun shines directly on the Windhoek CBD at 12h30. This insight could guide urban design by prioritising shade structures, tree planting, and covered seating in high-activity zones to maintain comfortable spaces during peak sun hours. This is useful for designing public plazas, pedestrian corridors, and outdoor markets, where excessive heat might discourage activity. Knowing this can also help plan building facades and window placements to reduce glare and improve energy efficiency, creating a more inviting and sustainable urban environment in the CBD.



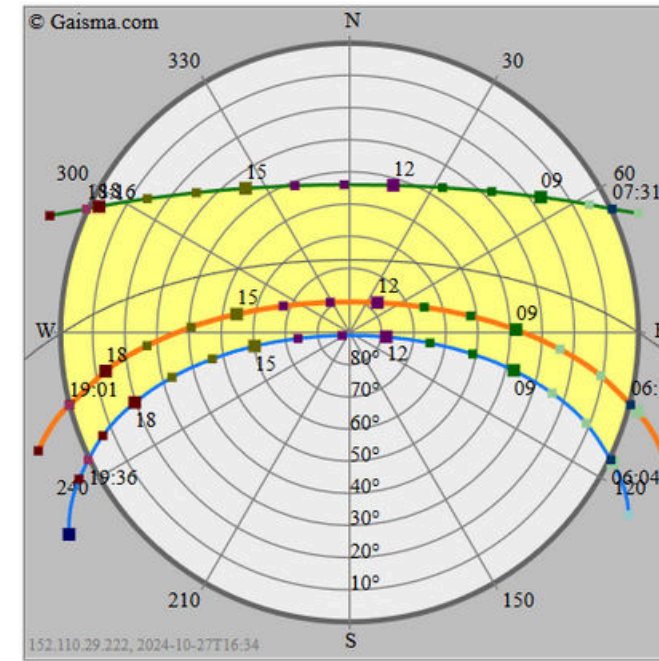
Independence Avenue has up to four lanes, adding to the disconnect between the streets of the CBD.



HOSEA KUTAKO DRIVE

The road university students have to cross to get to the business of the CBD

There is a need to improve the connectivity and accessibility for pedestrians and business owners to the CBD.



| Sun path | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Today | Orange |
| June solstice | Green |
| December solstice | Blue |
| Annual variation | Yellow |
| Equinox (March and September) | Grey |

| Time | |
|-------|-------------|
| 00-02 | Dark Grey |
| 03-05 | Light Blue |
| 06-08 | Light Green |
| 09-11 | Dark Green |
| 12-14 | Purple |
| 15-17 | Olive |
| 18-20 | Dark Red |
| 21-23 | Dark Blue |

| Sunrise/sunset | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Sunrise | Dark Blue |
| Sunset | Dark Red |

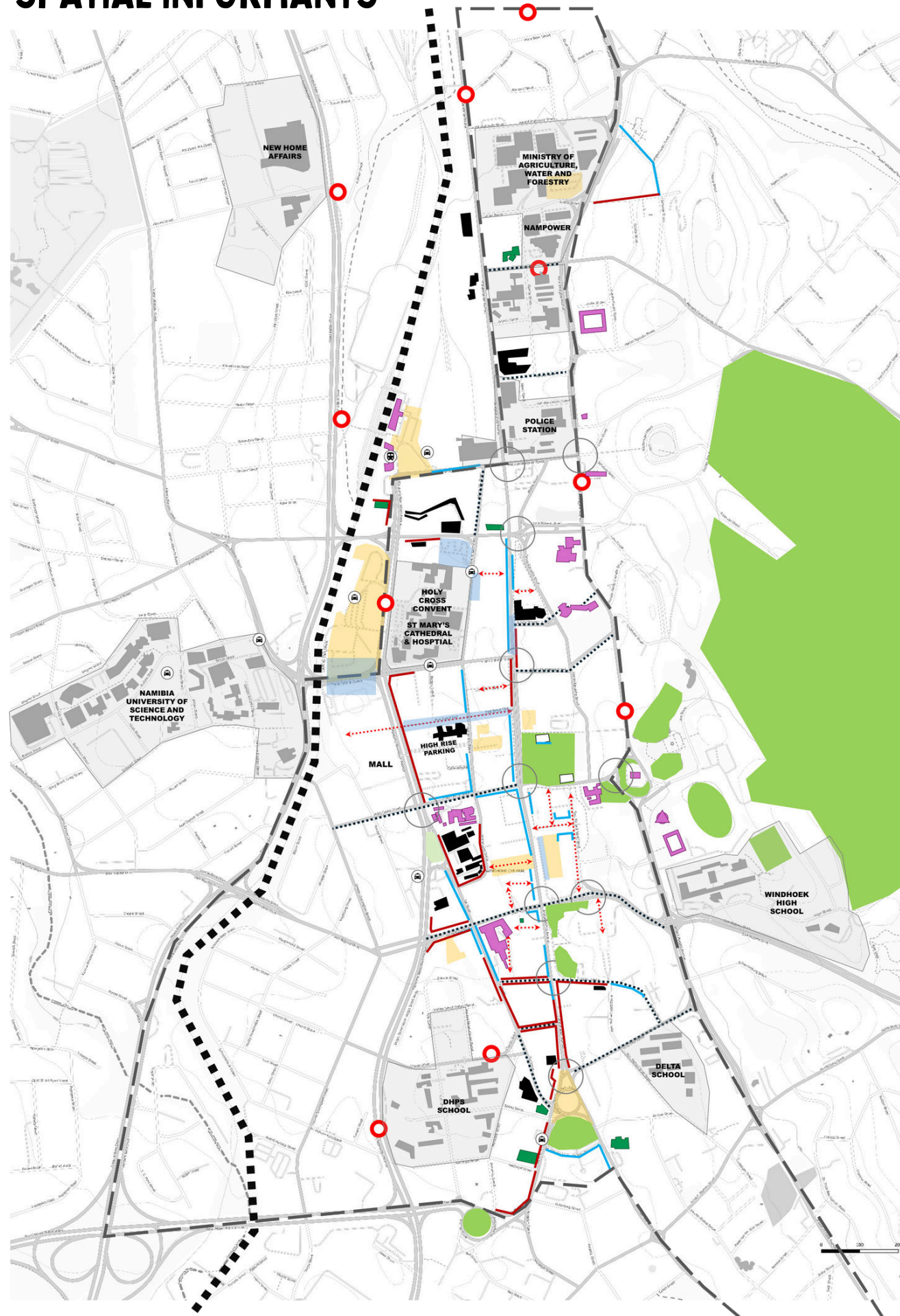
Represents a sun path map










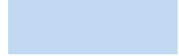





Hidden gems are located in shaded, intimate streets



SPATIAL INFORMANTS



Legend - Spatial informants

-  CBD boundary
-  Railway line
-  Taxi stops
-  Bus stops
-  Unsafe crossings
-  Dead economic edge
-  Active economic edge
-  Informal economy
-  Underutilized areas
-  Underutilised, vacant or decaying buildings
-  Green spaces
-  Financing and funding
-  Historic/ cultural buildings

CHAPTER

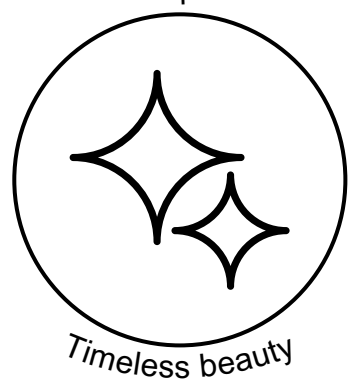
4

THE CENTRE REIMAGINED

DEPENDENCE AVENUE
CONCEPT DIAGRAM
CONNECT
HOLD
EXPERIENCE
CONSOLIDATED FRAMEWORK
PRECINCT PLAN
PUBLIC SPACE INTERVENTION
HIDDEN GEM INTERVENTION



In this chapter, the results of the fieldwork based on observations, questionnaires, and mapping of economic activity along Independence Avenue in Windhoek's Central Business District (CBD). The urban environment's current condition will be investigated by examining pedestrian pathways, local business activities, and public places and spaces. With this thorough examination, our goal is to pinpoint primary obstacles and showcase possibilities for rejuvenating the CBD. The knowledge acquired will guide urban design interventions that boost economic activity and enhance the pedestrian experience on Independence Avenue.



DEPENDENCE AVENUE: MAKING WINDHOEK DEPENDENT ON THE WINDHOEK CBD SO THAT IT CAN WORK HARMONIOUSLY TO BRING PEOPLE INTO THE CENTRE AND NOT INDEPENDENTLY

Vision: A vibrant, accessible, and inclusive urban hub where people are drawn to connect, experience local culture, and support thriving small businesses, creating a sustainable community for the future.

Aim: To create an inviting and lively CBD that seamlessly connects people with local culture, supports small businesses, and fosters a thriving urban community where visitors come to explore, shop, and stay.

ACCESS

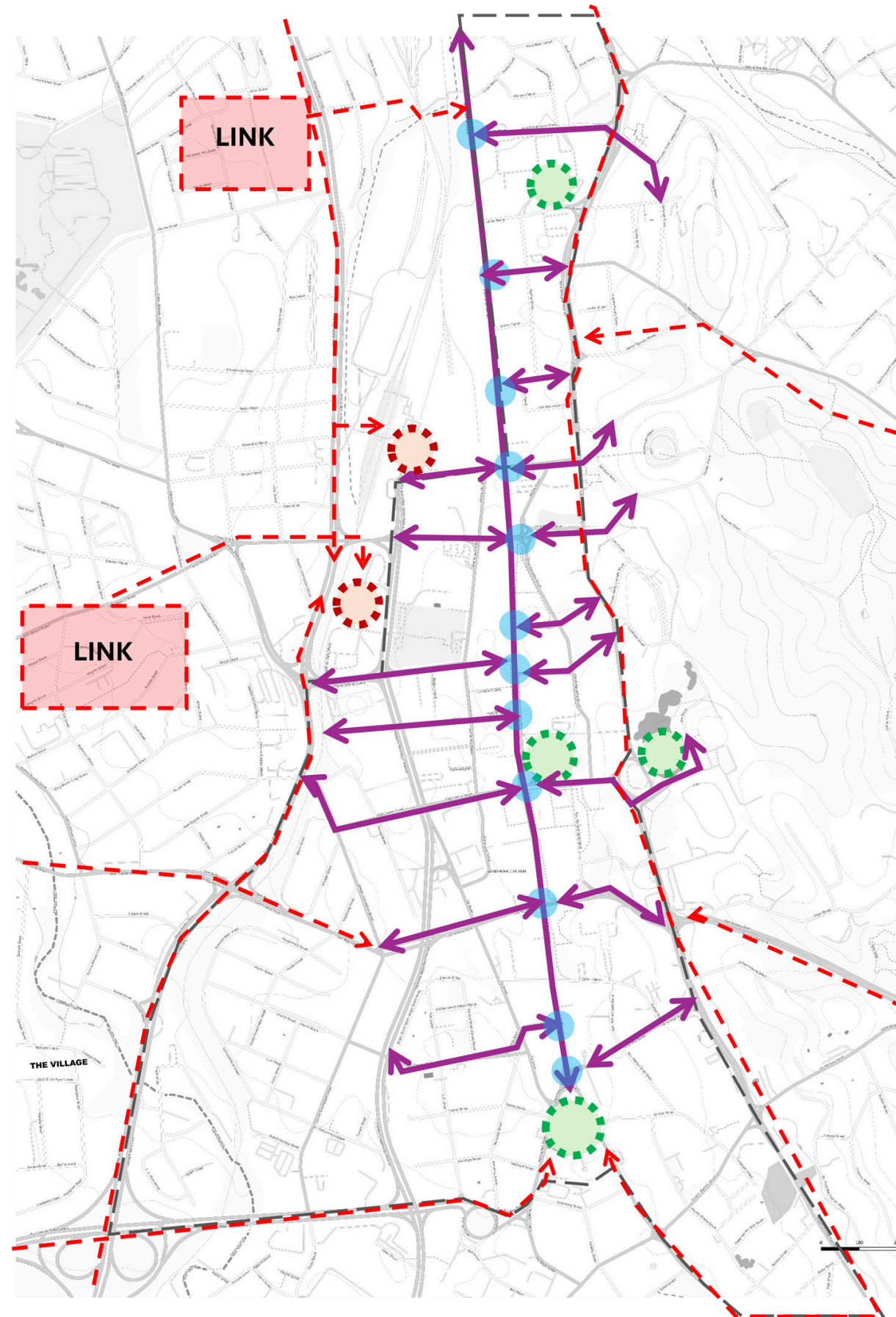
CHOICE

INCLUSIVITY

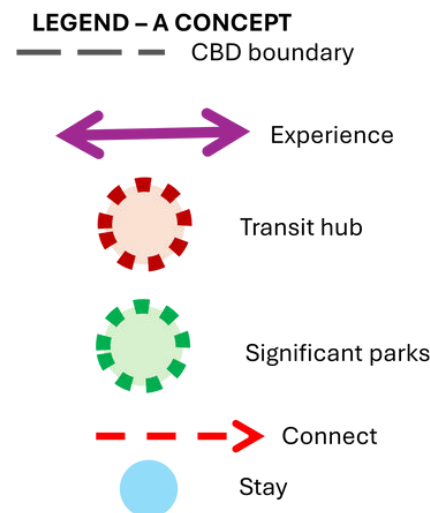
CONVENIENCE

The CBD must be easier to get to. If the CBD is accessible, convenient, and accessible, it gives people no reason not to visit the CBD. By looking at the multimodal transportation like the existing bus stops, taxi ranks, and bus route system, we can see there is a need to improve the bus system by enhancing bus stops into appropriate bus shelters, proposing additional bus route systems that connect the other institutions to the CBD, and enhancing the connectivity between the side streets and streetscapes through clear wayfinding and pedestrian-friendly design. There is a need for Independence to prioritize pedestrians and improve the connectivity of the streets and the institutions. There must be a continuous flow of connectivity that prioritizes access into the CBD but also the walking experience for pedestrians. And these then connect to the existing and proposed public spaces in the underutilized spaces through pedestrian infrastructure like improved lighting, shelter from the hot sun, and safe pedestrian crossings. Hold This looks at creating reasons for people to want to be in the CBD in the first place. The CBD must offer diverse housing options from student housing to apartment complexes, etc. It looks at the abundance of car dealerships along Independence Avenue that are already appropriately located near SMMEs and small businesses so that we can perpetuate the idea that people stay within the CBD. There also need to be diverse economic opportunities and job opportunities that incentivize people to want to start businesses. And then offering convenient amenities that hold people in. There is a need to densify areas that are low density, infill developed in underutilized spaces, and then offer commercial activity on the ground floor of the CBD. By promoting this mixed-use development, the CBD can be more convenient and offer a variety of choices and options. Experience A sense of place needs to be fostered that really incentivizes people to explore the CBD and enjoy the sense of place that is created through cultural attractions, interactive public spaces that have a range of flexible activities like pop-up activities and other community-oriented spaces, and making people enjoy these moments as they have moments to breathe and experience the CBD. This looked at historic building characters that can be adaptive and re-used into spaces that foster interaction. Connecting the existing institutions to these spaces and then really improving the integration of historically significant or cultural structures to the CBD, like the national museum, public libraries, historic churches, and old brewers' markets that are disconnected from Independence Avenue. So, it's about these east-west connections creating a sense of place and integrating these public spaces into the fabric through engagement. Knowing that public spaces can be markets on the weekend or spaces that hold protests. Overall, creating a space where the local economy can thrive and where there is a constant flow of pedestrian traffic and interaction.

CONCEPT



The concept is about refocusing attention back onto the CBD and Independence Avenue so that it can be the centre that connects the rest of Windhoek, making these fragmented parts dependent on the CBD as a city centre. The concept is reimagining a city centre that is inclusive to all types of people, is green and clean, highly accessible, fosters community, and has a local identity or culture. It's all about creating an engaging environment where people feel they have choices or options. It's similar to gentle parenting your child by asking them, 'Do you want an apple or a banana?' Regardless of what they choose, your child will still be eating a fruit. Choice in modes of transportation to enter the CBD, choice of types of businesses they can occupy, and choice of what to do in the CBD and public spaces to interact with. A CBD of choice fosters a cultural identity. The goal is to get people into the CBD. This is based on what Cullen said in "The Concise Townscape" when he mentioned the importance of creating a sense of culture or identity, and Jane Jacobs in "Downtown is for People" when she mentioned the importance of convenience. From my theoretical framework, I devised that the way to get people to engage with the local economy is to pique their interest, make them curious, and then make them come back again. The concept is to 1) make it easier to get to the CBD, 2) create reasons to be in the CBD, and 3) make it an enjoyable experience that will make them want to return again. The concept diagram looks at improving accessibility to the CBD and creating transit hubs that are paired with public space, developing reasons to stay on Independence Avenue like housing or significant parks, and then creating an experience of getting from these transit hubs and stops to the CBD via the local economy and a sense of culture or identity. It emphasizes the need to connect these fragmented parts of Windhoek via the distinct character of the CBD by reimagining if the CBD was Dependence Avenue that Windhoek relies on as the city centre.



| | | |
|-------------|------------|---|
| Objectives: | CONNECT | Make it easier to access the CBD. |
| | HOLD | Create reasons to be in the CBD. |
| | EXPERIENCE | Create a memorable and enjoyable experience in the CBD. |

1 CONNECT

4
CONCEPT

Make it easier to access the CBD.

Goal: Foster seamless movement and accessibility within the CBD for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

1. Multimodal Transportation

- Design a multimodal transport hub to integrate buses, taxis, and future light rail systems, ensuring efficient transfers between modes.
- Provide secure bike parking and dedicated cycling lanes along major streets.
- Implement pedestrian-priority zones near key activity nodes.

2. Clear Wayfinding

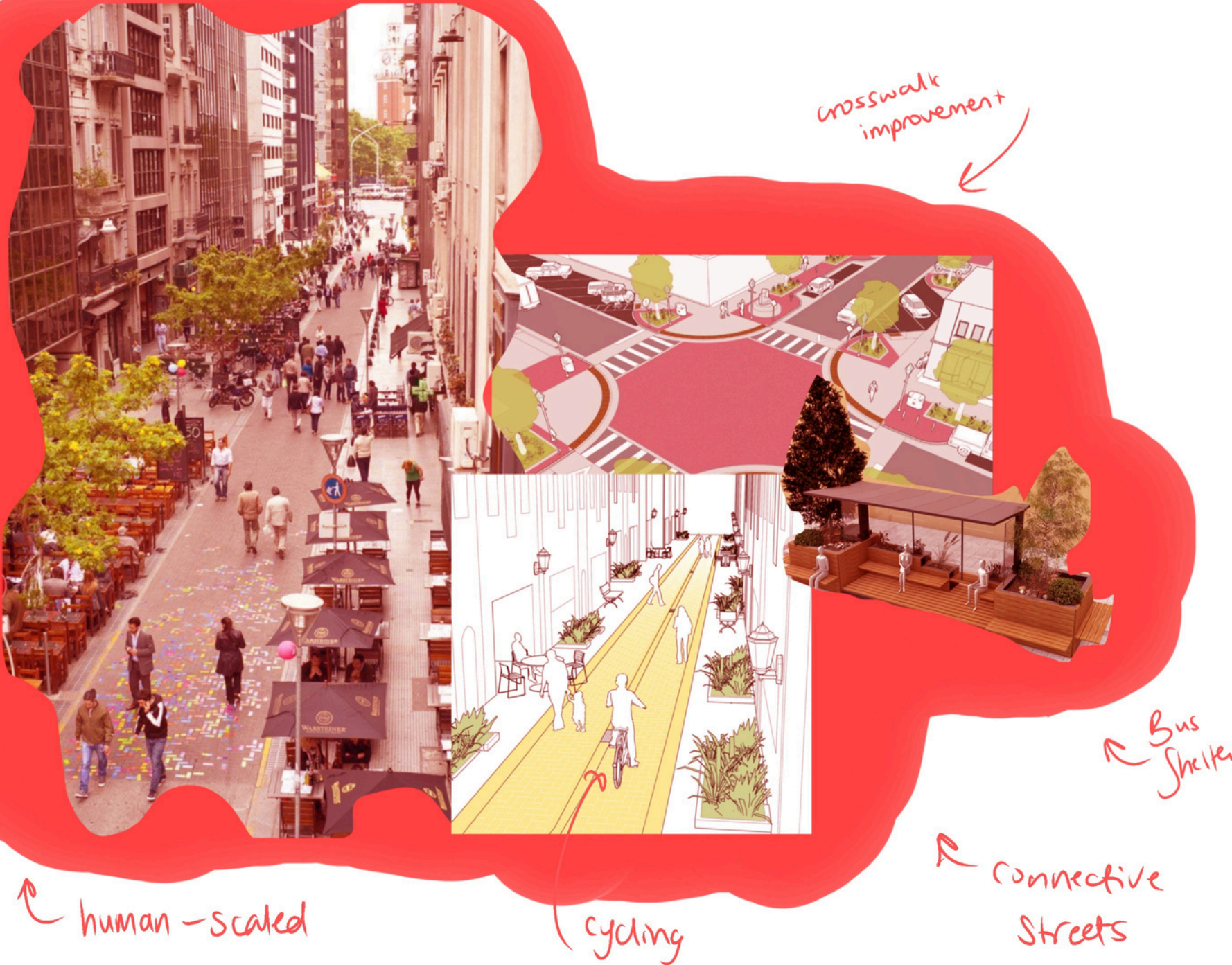
- Install consistent, multilingual signage with clear directions to landmarks, transport hubs, and key attractions.
- Use visual cues such as colour-coded paths, textured pavements, and digital information boards.
- Include accessible wayfinding tools for people with disabilities, such as tactile maps and audible navigation systems.

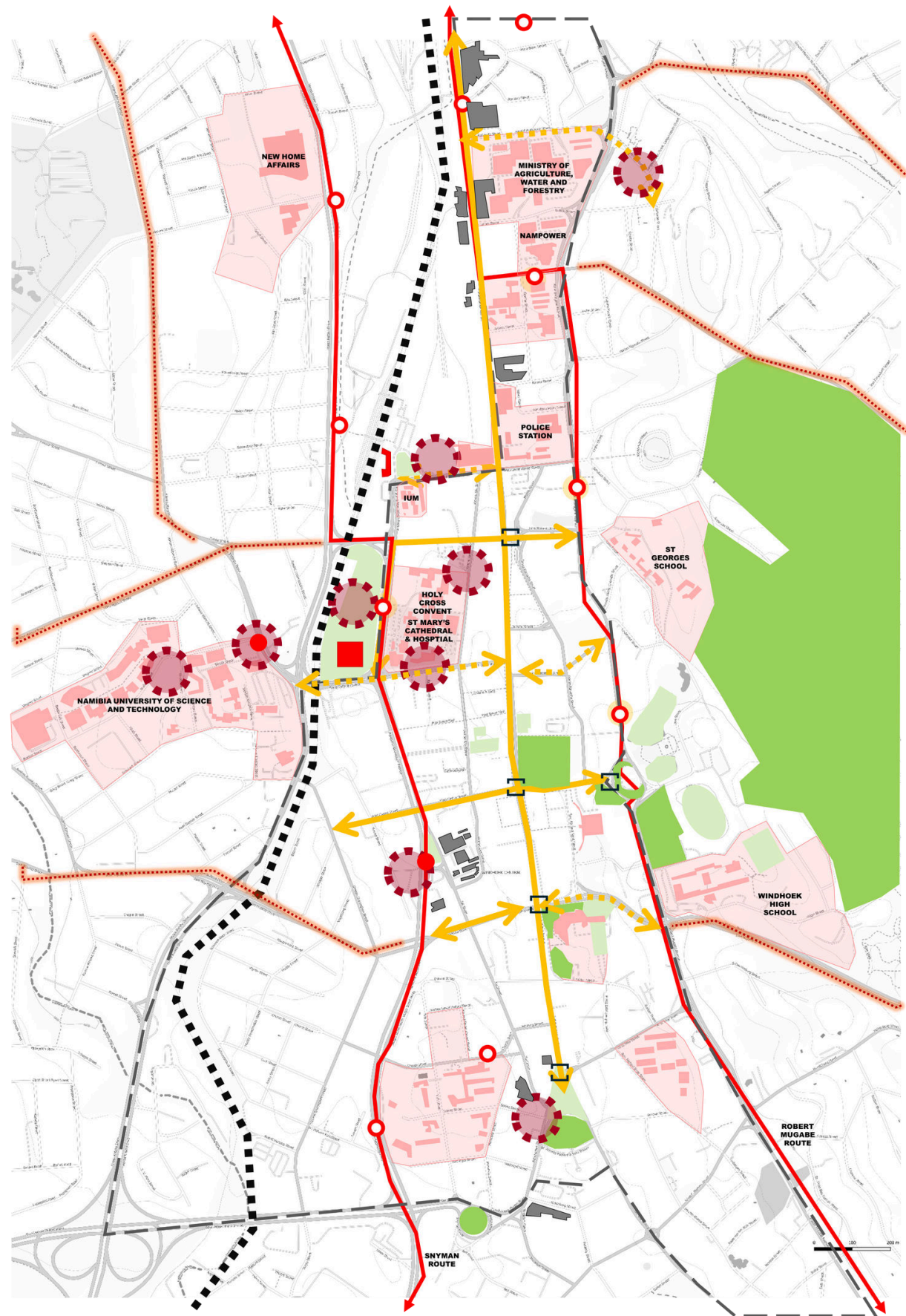
3. Pedestrian-Friendly Design

- Widen sidewalks with smooth surfaces, shaded by trees or canopies.
- Incorporate street furniture, lighting, and crossings designed for safety and accessibility.
- Introduce traffic-calming measures like raised crosswalks, narrowed vehicle lanes, and shared street designs.

4. Connective Streetscape

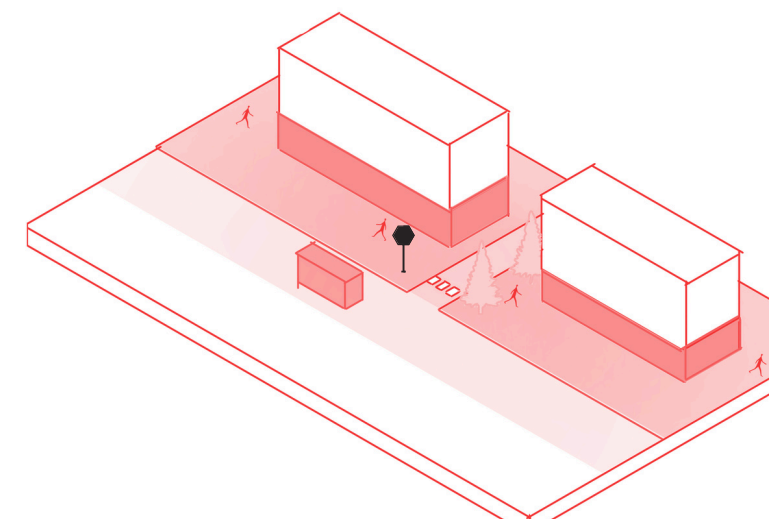
- Redesign streets to prioritize active mobility by reducing vehicular dominance and increasing pedestrian and cyclist space.
- Create seamless links between public spaces, parks, and major landmarks through green corridors.
- Integrate vibrant ground-floor uses, like cafes and shops, along key pedestrian routes to enhance connectivity.



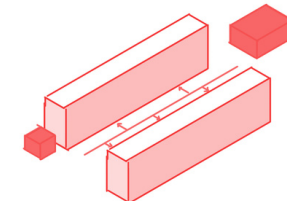


LEGEND - CONNECT

- CBD boundary
- ■ ■ ■ ■ Enhanced railway line
- ⊗ Existing taxi nodes
- Enhanced pedestrian crossing
- Existing institutions/offices
- ↔ Existing bus line
- Existing bus stops
- Proposed bus stops
- ⊙ Enhanced bus stops
- Proposed open space
- Existing open space
- ↔ Pedestrian road diet
- Proposed multimodal transport hub
- ↔ Enhanced pedestrian priority
- Proposed housing development



Connective streetscapes



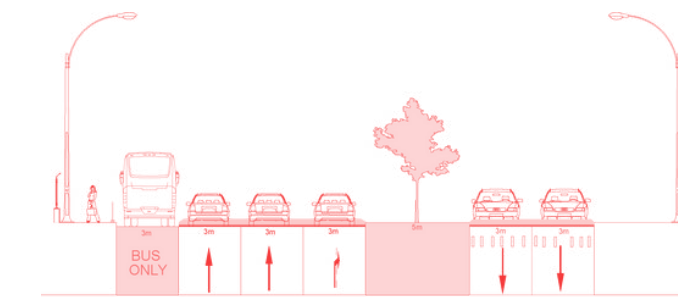
Wayfinding



Active streetscapes

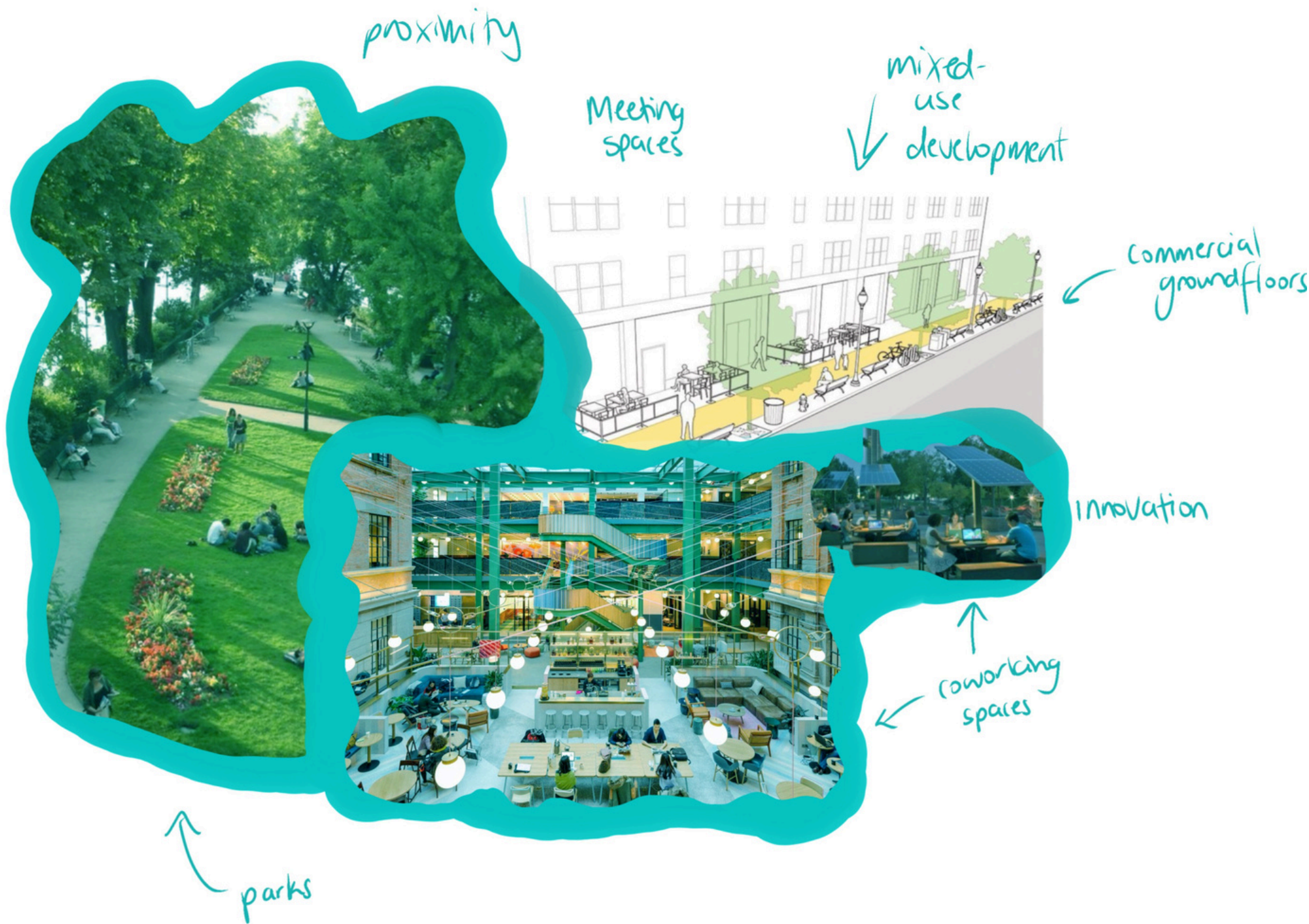


Transit-oriented development



2 HOLD

Create reasons to be in the CBD.



Goal: Establish a resilient and inclusive urban environment with diverse opportunities for living, working, and leisure.

1. Diverse Economy and Job Opportunities

- Promote spaces for informal traders and small businesses by creating modular kiosks and flexible market spaces.
- Support mixed-use developments with ground-floor commercial activities tailored to local entrepreneurs.
- Encourage incubation hubs for startups and SMMEs within the CBD.

2. Diverse Housing Options

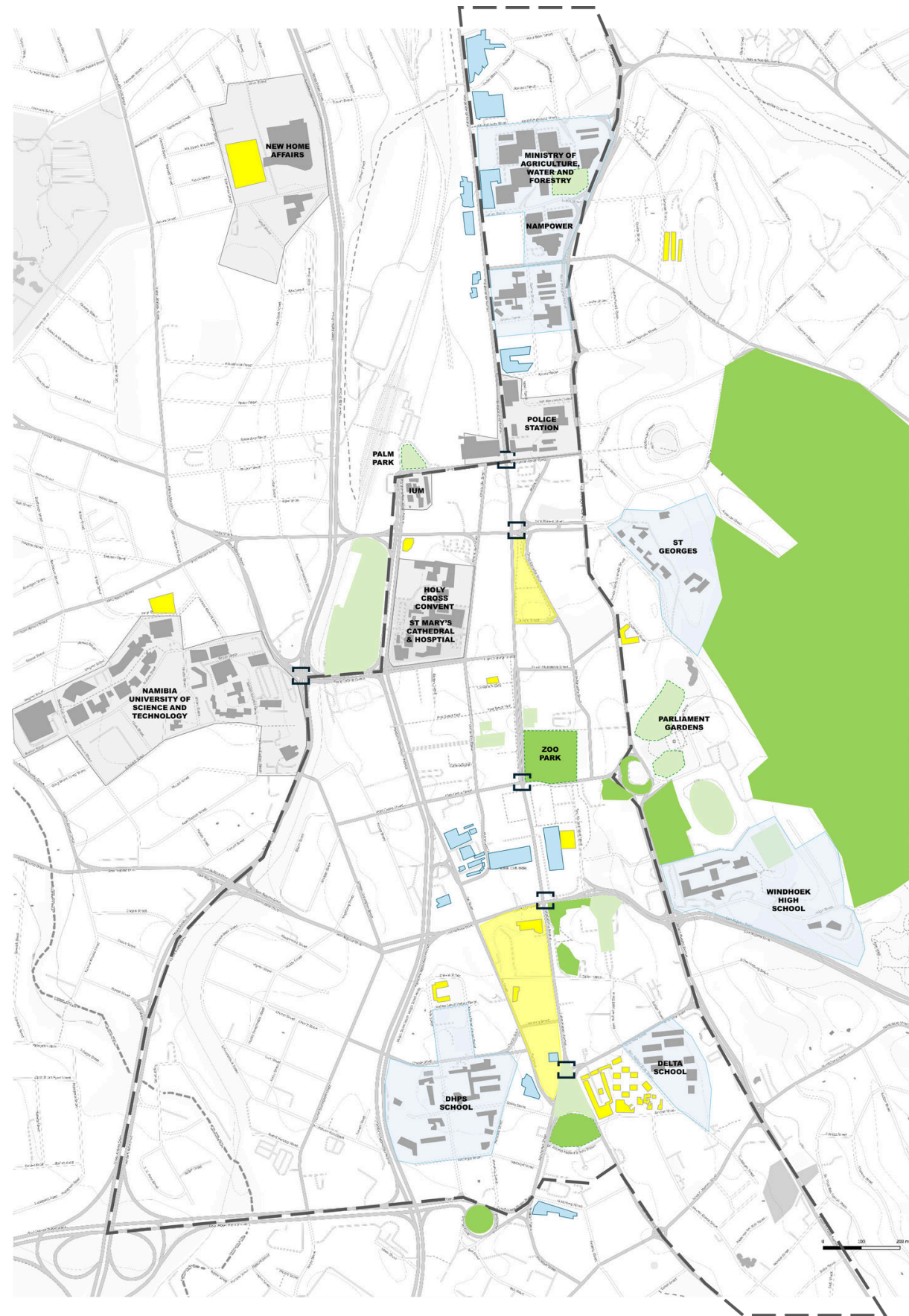
- Introduce a mix of housing typologies, including affordable housing, student housing, and mid-range apartments, to attract diverse residents.
- Design housing developments with active ground floors, shared amenities, and proximity to transit.
- Ensure housing integrates seamlessly with public spaces and economic nodes.

3. Significant Parks

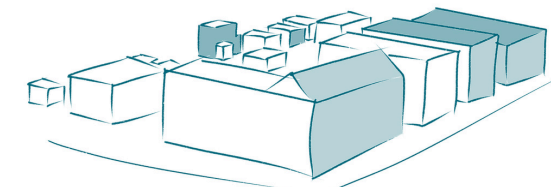
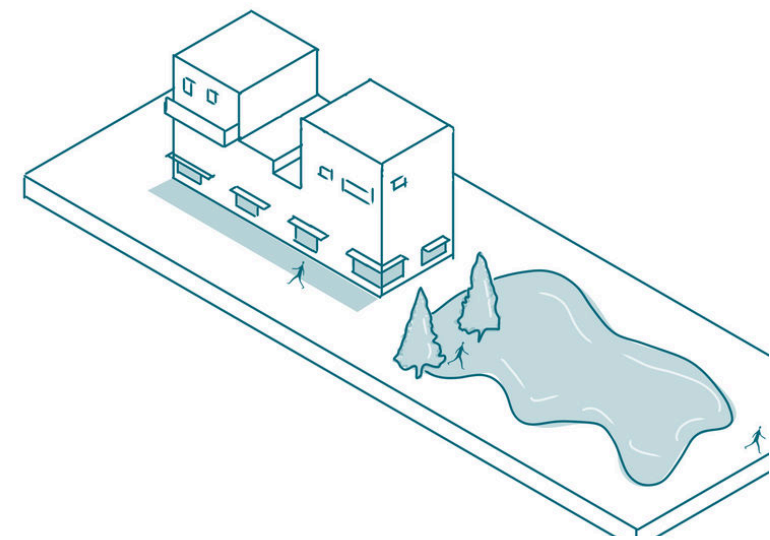
- Develop accessible parks with multifunctional spaces for relaxation, events, and informal trade.
- Incorporate water features, seating, and shaded areas to enhance usability.
- Design parks to accommodate diverse users, including children, seniors, and families.

4. Convenient Amenities

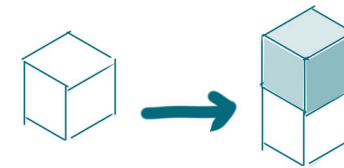
- Distribute essential services (e.g., healthcare, retail, banking) strategically across the CBD for easy access.
- Include public restrooms, charging stations, and free Wi-Fi in key activity hubs.
- Ensure amenities are accessible to all, with features like ramps and gender-inclusive facilities.



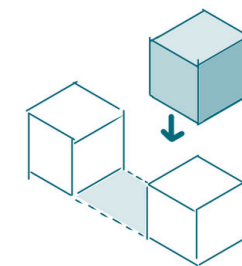
- LEGEND - HOLD**
- CBD boundary
 - Proposed park node
 - Proposed infill development
 - Enhanced pedestrian crossing
 - Proposed open space
 - Existing open space
 - Existing housing
 - Proposed densification
 - Existing institutions
 - Proposed multifunctional spaces



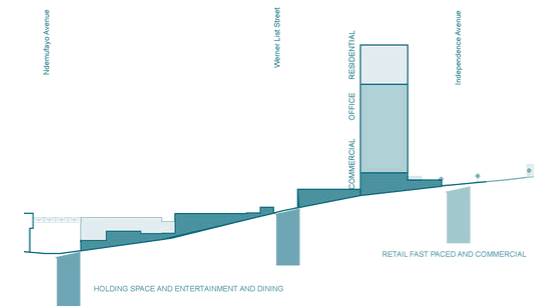
Creating a range of housing



Higher densities



Infill



Commercial activity on the ground floor

Mixed-use development

3 EXPERIENCE

Create a sense of place in the CBD.

4
CONCEPT

Goal: Create a lively and culturally rich environment that encourages public engagement and social interaction.

1. Cultural Attractions

- Highlight Windhoek's cultural heritage through art installations, murals, and public sculptures.
- Develop spaces for cultural performances, such as outdoor stages or amphitheaters.
- Collaborate with local artists to design culturally reflective elements in public spaces.

2. Interactive Public Spaces

- Design plazas and squares with flexible seating, interactive art, and play areas.
- Incorporate digital kiosks or augmented reality elements to engage users in exploring the city's history and culture.
- Provide shaded gathering spaces for informal meetings and community events.

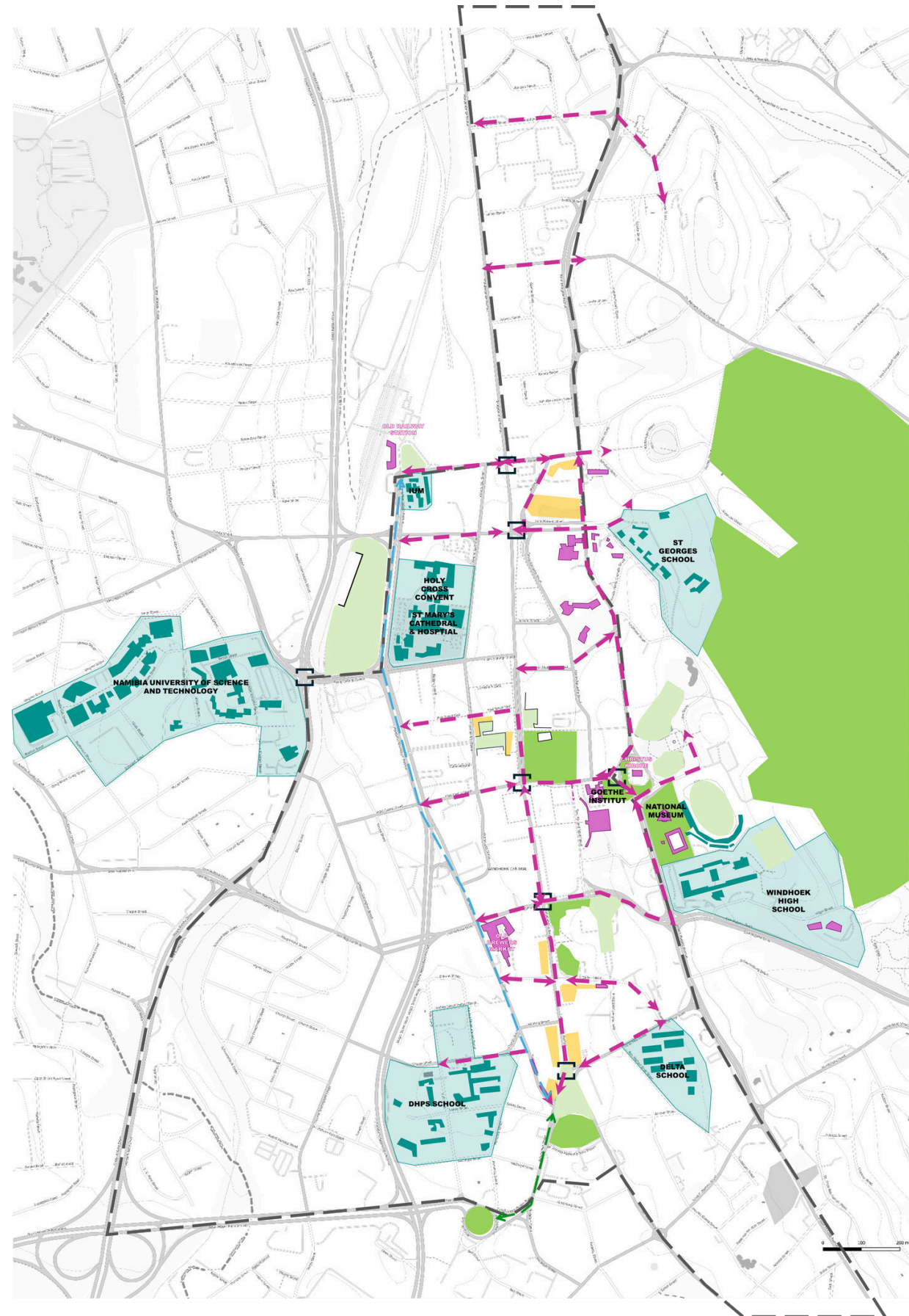
3. Green Spaces and Relaxation Areas

- Prioritize green infrastructure like rooftop gardens, vertical greenery, and pocket parks.
- Use native plants to create low-maintenance, eco-friendly spaces.
- Add features like hammocks, quiet zones, and meditation areas for relaxation.

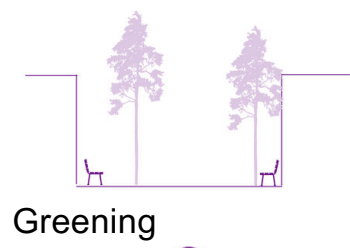
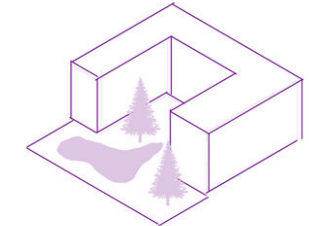
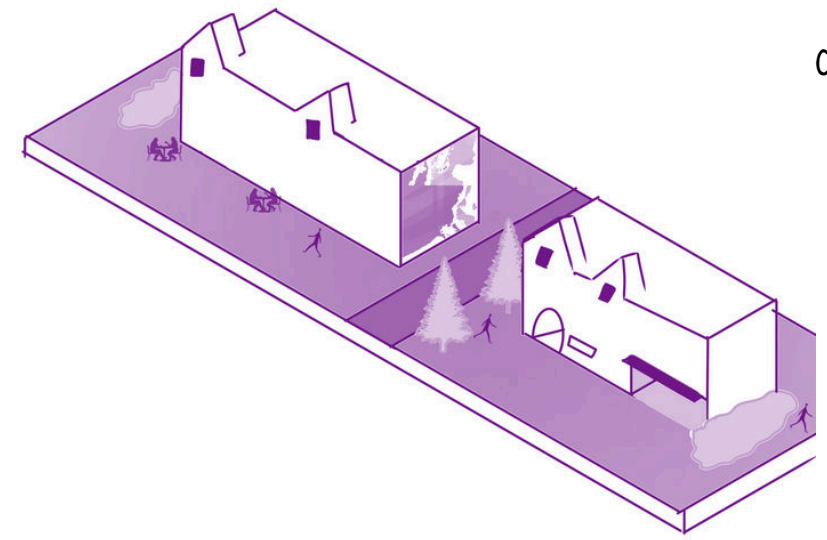
4. Pop-Up Activities and Community-Oriented Spaces

- Encourage pop-up markets, food trucks, and cultural festivals to activate public spaces.
- Design modular and temporary structures that can adapt to different activities and seasons.
- Partner with community organizations to co-create events and programming in public spaces.

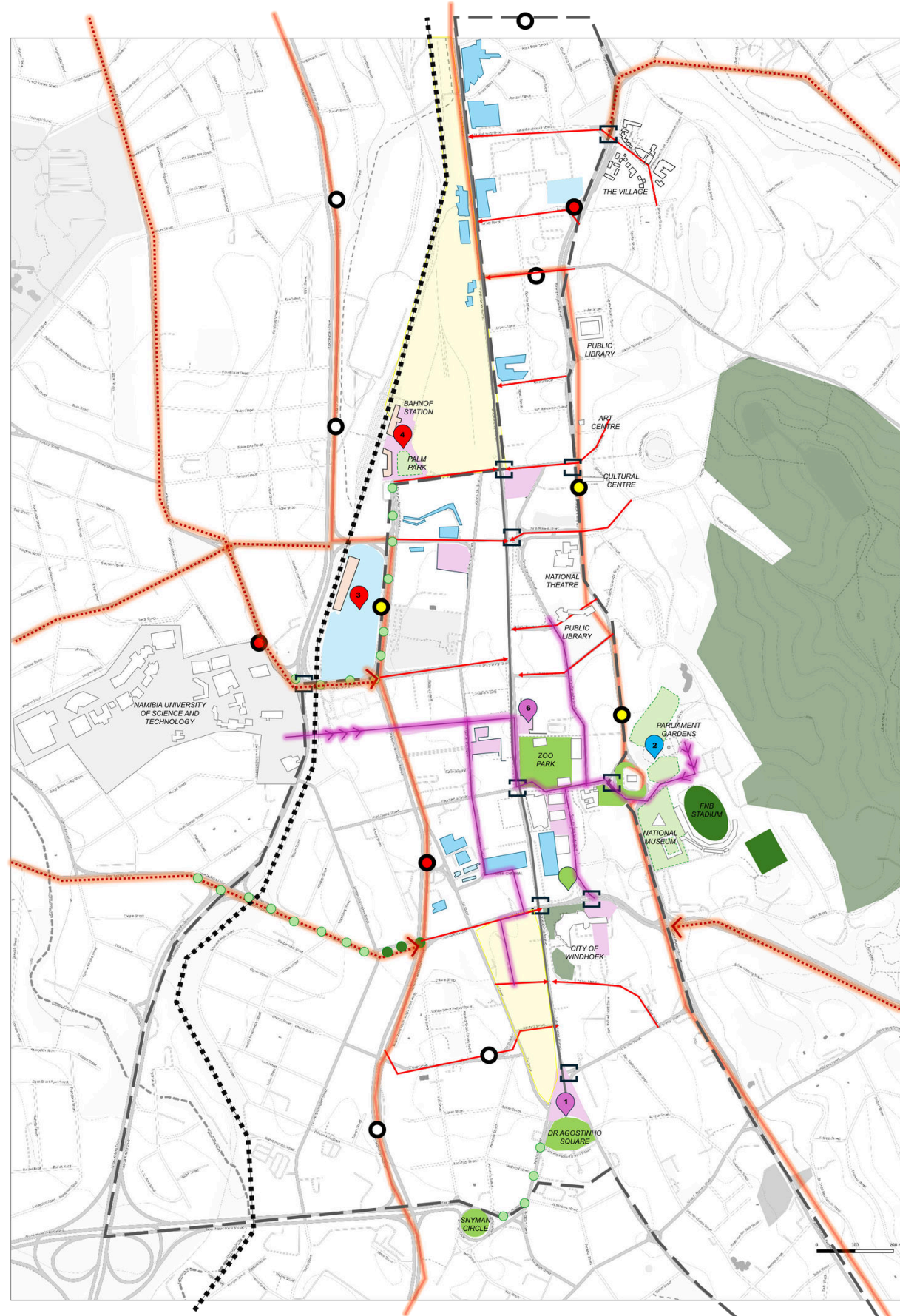




- LEGEND - EXPERIENCE**
- CBD boundary
 - Historic building character
 - Proposed open space
 - Existing open space
 - Enhanced pedestrian crossing
 - Historically significant structures
 - Proposed experience connections
 - Existing institutions
 - Proposed stormwater management



CONSOLIDATED FRAMEWORK



LEGEND – CONSOLIDATED FRAMEWORK

- Connecting
- Holding space
- Experience space
- Proposed building upgrading and densification
- CBD boundary
- Rail
- Enhanced pedestrian crossing
- Proposed tree planting
- Proposed bus route
- Existing bus route
- Interactive streetscapes
- Cultural route
- Existing public parks
- Proposed public parks
- Green spaces
- Proposed consolidated housing development with commercial activity on ground floor

- Proposed bus stops
- Enhanced bus stops
- Existing bus stops

INTERVENTIONS

- 1 Dr Agostinho Square
 - 2 Parliament Gardens
 - 3 Proposed intracity transit hub
 - 4 Proposed intercity transit hub
 - 5 Proposed Justice Square
- Potential connecting interventions
 - Potential holding interventions
 - Potential experience interventions

PRECINCT PLAN

Goals

1

IMPROVING MARKET POTENTIAL

- High foot traffic areas and existing pedestrian flow where new businesses or public spaces will attract more people.
- Spaces with potential for mixed-use development to encourage a steady flow of people throughout the day and night to sustain businesses and increase safety.
- Development targets existing or emerging local business owners, entrepreneurs and SMMEs.

2

IMPROVING PUBLIC REALM QUALITY

- Proximity to public spaces and recreational facilities to enhance and improve livelihoods.
- Proximity to accessible public facilities to enhance functionality and connectivity.

3

REVITALISING UNDERUTILISED SPACES

- Spaces that are currently vacant or underutilised have potential for economic activities and social spaces.
- Informal trading zones that can be reorganised into safe spaces with access to public facilities.

4

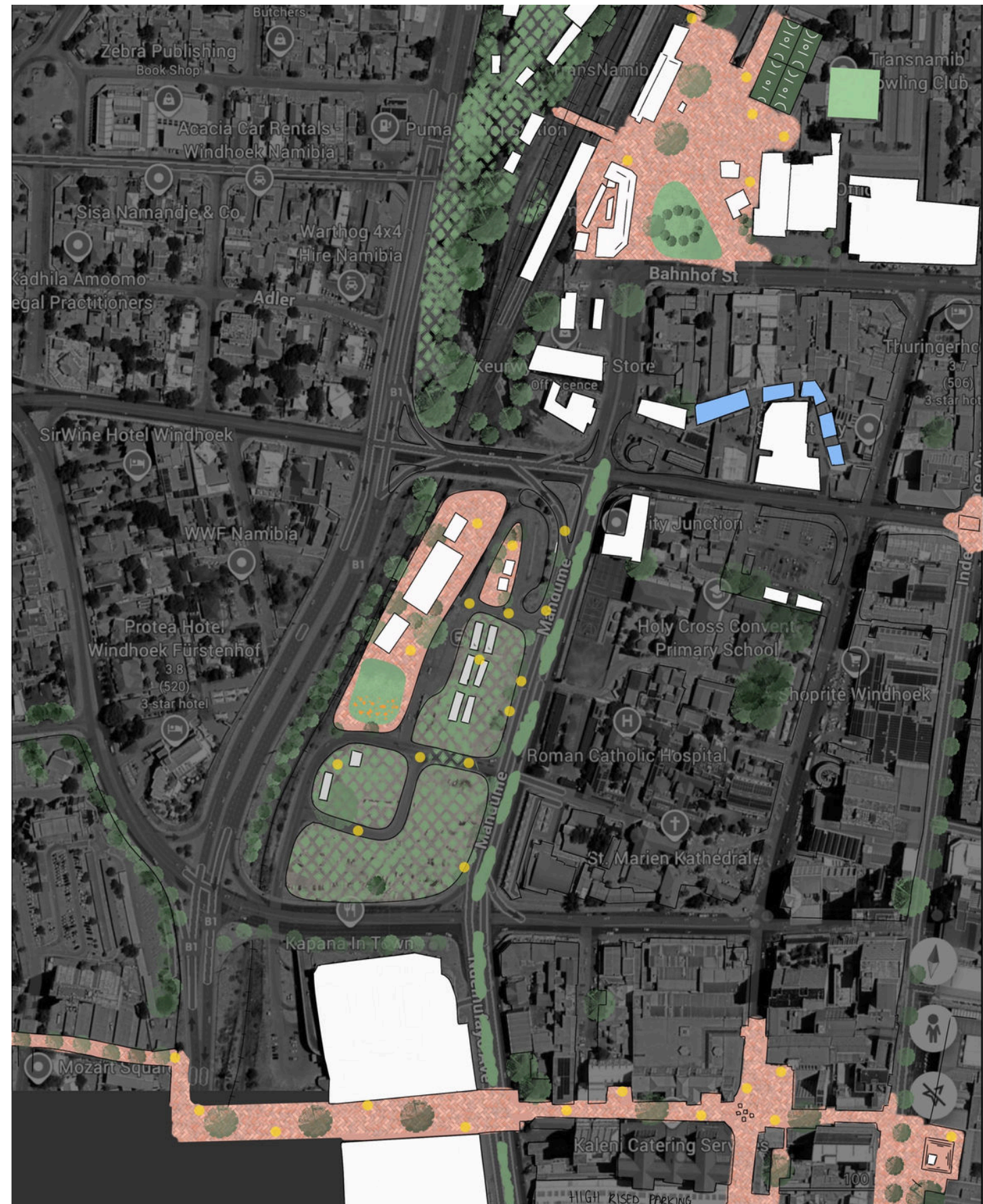
ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY & SAFETY

- Address spatial barriers, dead zones and inactive facades that disrupt connectivity and discourage foot traffic.
- Development targets spaces that are perceived as unsafe, encouraging more people to visit and engage with the area.
- Areas where there are strong public transportation links to facilitate easy access for customers and business owners.

5

FOSTERING COMMUNITY & CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

- Target areas rich in cultural heritage to support heritage-based businesses, markets, and cultural events, fostering community pride and identity.
- Potential to collaborate with local businesses and community organisations to create a supportive network that enhances economic activity.
- Zones that host seasonal events, markets or festivals that can drive local economic growth and expose small businesses to larger audiences.



BRINGING WINDHOEK TO CBD

PHASE ONE: INTERCITY TRANSIT HUB

HOLD

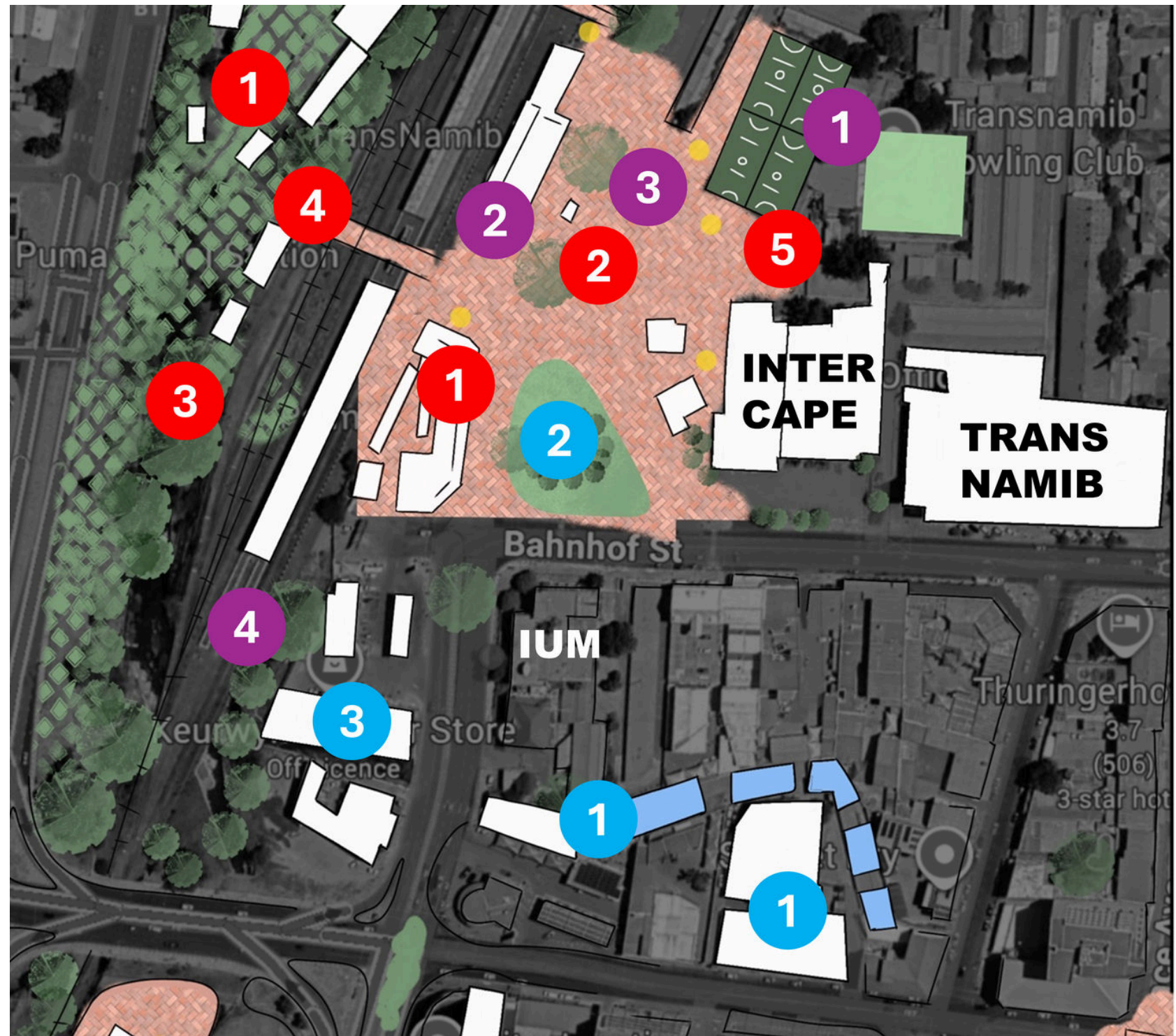
1. Proposed infill of housing
2. Proposed Palm Tree Park to open up to public
3. Proposed eatery

CONNECT

1. Proposed truck stop
2. Drop off zone
3. Proposed railway to transport people
4. Improve safety of bridges
5. Proposed lighting

EXPERIENCE

1. Civic Bowling club and basketball courts
2. Adaptive reuse of railway station
3. New civic mixed use area with forecourt
4. Proposed tree planting



SUSTAINING VISITORS

PHASE TWO: INTRACITY TRANSIT HUB

HOLD

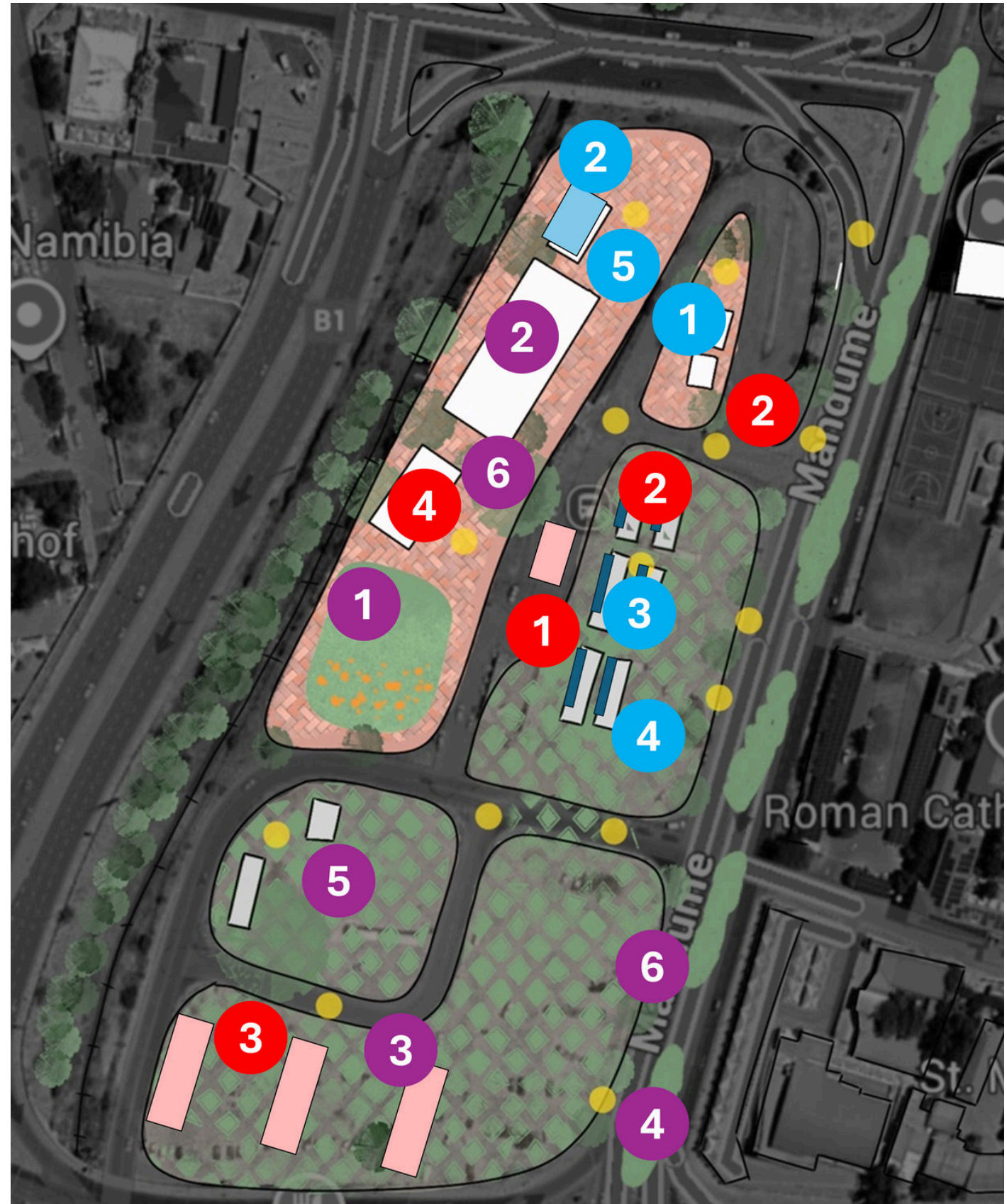
1. Public facilities and toilets
2. Proposed residential apartment
3. Proposed outdoor eating market
4. Proposed court outdoor seating
5. Improved paving

CONNECT

1. Bus stop and shelter
2. Solar lights
3. Taxi rank and stop
4. Proposed bike rentals

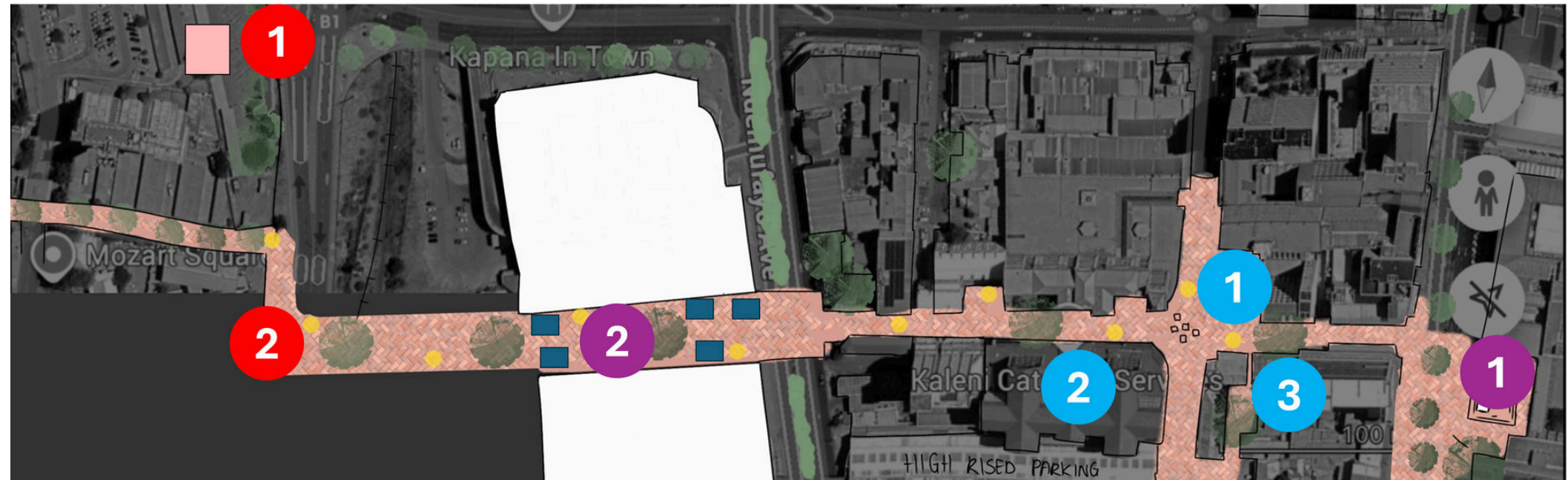
EXPERIENCE

1. Community garden
2. New civic mixed use facility with forecourt
3. Proposed green paving
4. Bioswales
5. New car and taxi wash
6. Proposed tree planting



CONNECTING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO INDEPENDENCE

PHASE THREE: MEMORABLE SPACES AND ROUTES



CONNECT

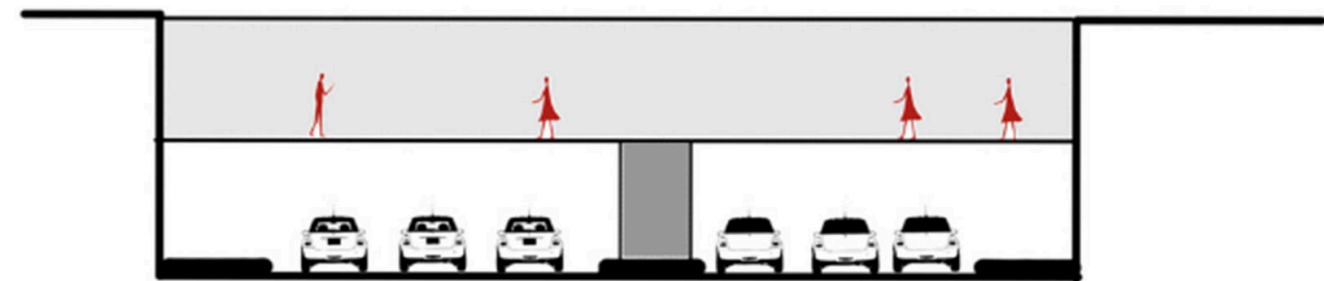
1. Bus stop and shelter
2. Solar lights

HOLD

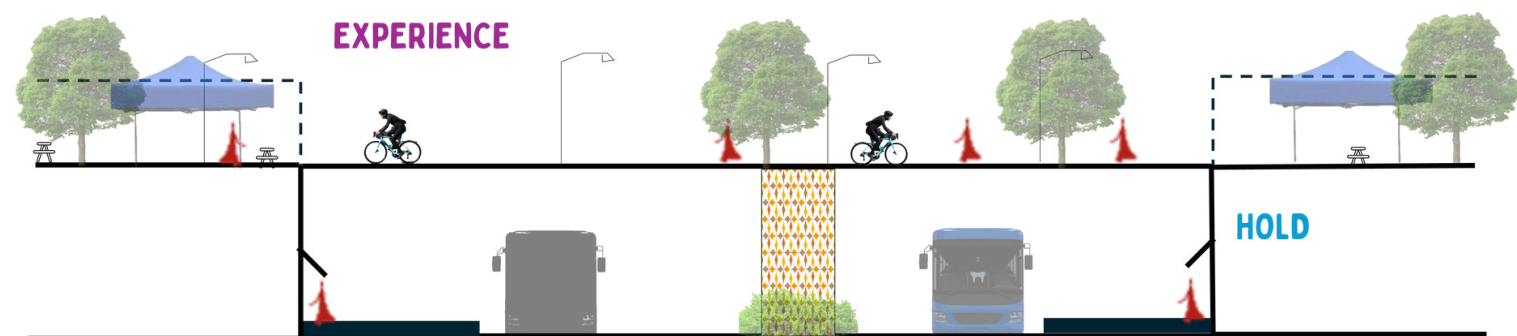
1. Proposed performance space
2. Proposed mixed use housing developments with restaurants on the groundfloor
3. Reinvent Gathemann Restaurant

EXPERIENCE

1. Proposed Justice Square
2. Proposed flexible market space for showcasing
3. Smooth paving



Before



After

CONNECT

Toolkit

- Showcasing spaces
- Market spaces
- Groundloor activation

PUBLIC SPACE INTERVENTION

EXPERIENCE SPACE EXAMPLE

Public space intervention

Strategies

- 1 Temporary pop up stalls in underutilised public spaces
- 2 Wayfinding to public spaces so they connect people and make it easier walk to like Namibian cultural attractions
- 3 Namibian cultural attractions
- 4 Extended trading hours through improved safety and sustained pedestrian flow.
- 5 Shading and shelter



HIDDEN GEM INTERVENTION

ALLEYWAYS FOR SMMEs

Reimagining alleyways to sustain the local economy

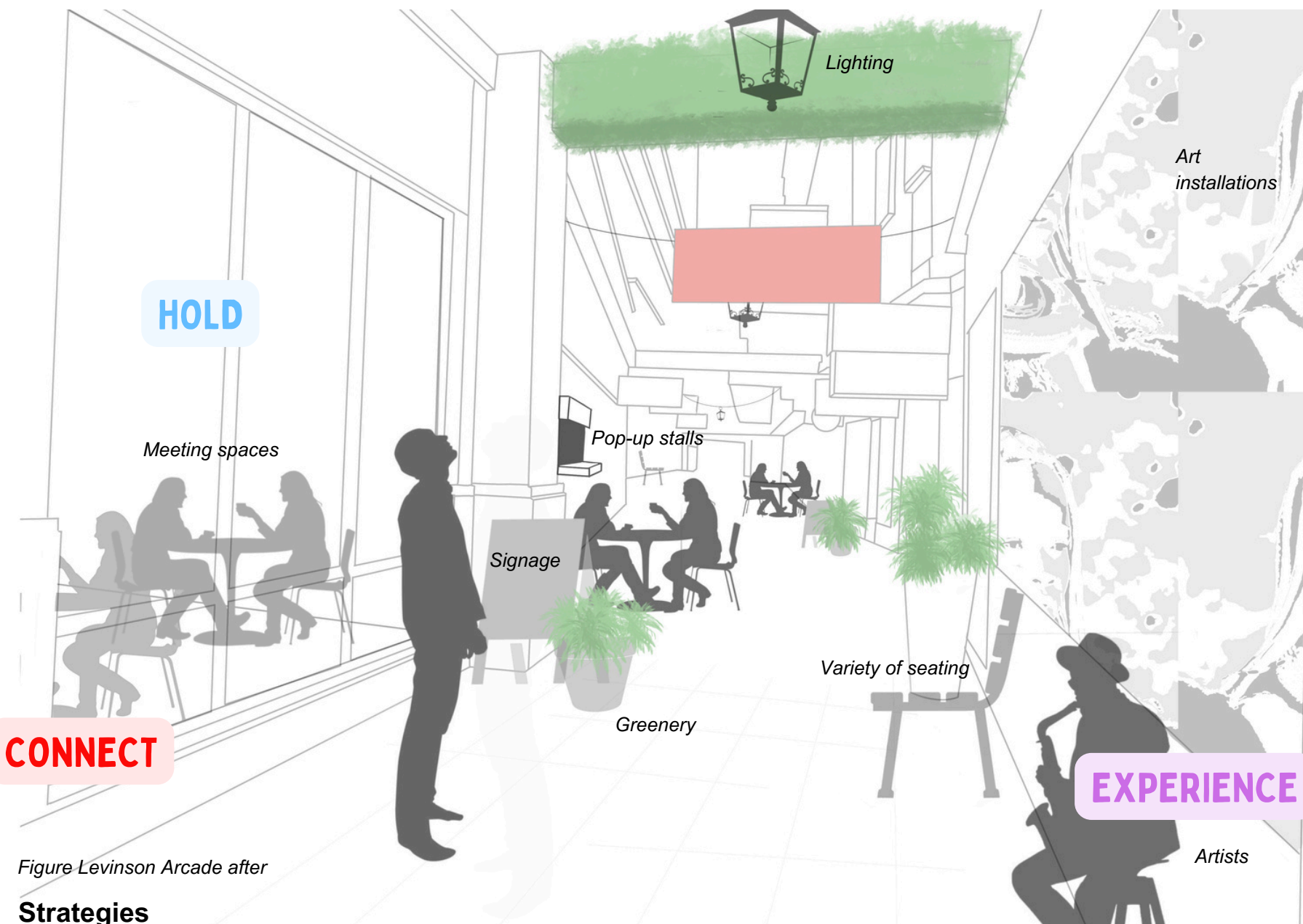


Figure Levinson Arcade after

Strategies

- 1 Affordable rental spaces ideal for start ups,, pop-up shops and artisans who may not be able to afford prime storefront locations.
- 2 Enhanced foot traffic by activating alleyways to attract more pedestrians, creating lively areas that draw pedestrians to these underutilised paths.
- 3 Offering a unique, intimate setting that fosters a sense of place and community.
- 4 Meeting and co-working spaces that offer a space for business owners to collaborate and innovate.
- 5 Extended trading hours through improved safety and sustained pedestrian flow.
- 6 Incubators for local entrepreneurs to test their products or stalls in smaller, flexible spaces.

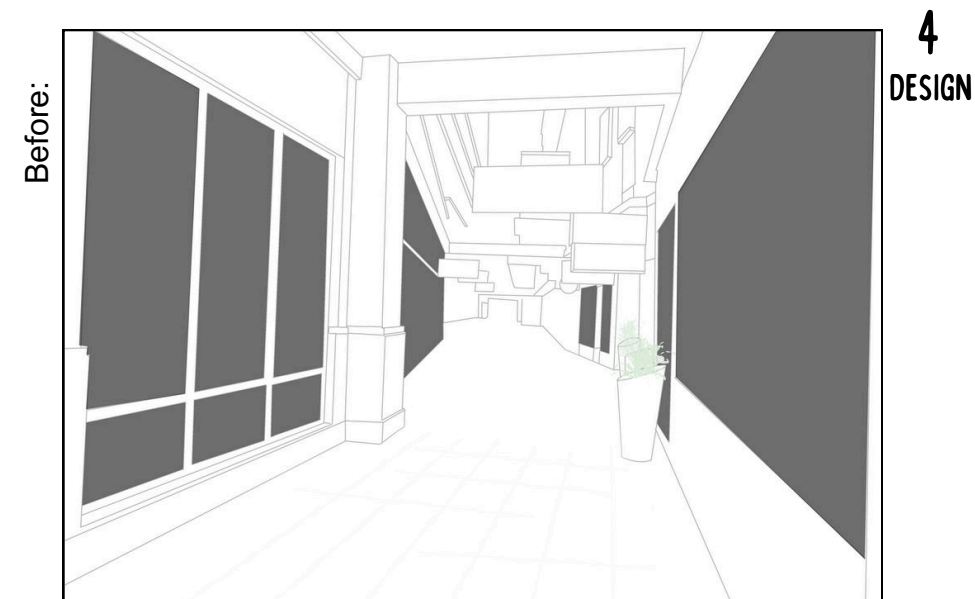


Figure: Levinson Arcade before

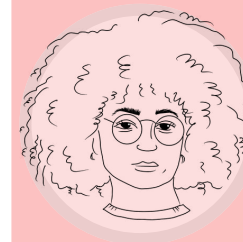
Toolkit

- Business incubators
- Business accelerators
- Makerspaces
- Innovation hubs

CHAPTER 5

THE ROAD AHEAD

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
CONCLUSION
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**



In this chapter, the results of the fieldwork based on observations, questionnaires, and mapping of economic activity along Independence Avenue in Windhoek's Central Business District (CBD). The urban environment's current condition will be investigated by examining pedestrian pathways, local business activities, and public places and spaces. With this thorough examination, our goal is to pinpoint primary obstacles and showcase possibilities for rejuvenating the CBD. The knowledge acquired will guide urban design interventions that boost economic activity and enhance the pedestrian experience on Independence Avenue.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

IMMEDIATE INTERVENTIONS (0-2 YEARS)

Focus: Quick wins to activate the CBD and build stakeholder trust.

CONNECT

- Install temporary wayfinding signage using cost-effective materials like painted pathways.
- Add interim pedestrian crossings and bollards near high-traffic areas.
- Create a pop-up multimodal transport hub with clear routing for taxis, buses, and cyclists.
- A mindset shift is needed to promote public transport for the public.

HOLD

- Support for Informal Traders:
- Introduce modular kiosks for informal traders in key areas, with basic amenities like water and electricity.
- Affordable housing in vacant or underutilised buildings for conversion into pilot affordable housing projects.

EXPERIENCE

- Host bi-weekly night markets and cultural events to draw foot traffic into the CBD.
- Pilot interactive spaces, such as a small plaza with moveable furniture, public Wi-Fi, and local art installations.

SHORT TERM (2-5 YEARS)

Focus: Strengthening foundational infrastructure and expanding successes from the previous term.

CONNECT

- Build protected bike lanes and pedestrian walkways linking key areas like the university, Parliament Gardens, and major business districts.
- Begin permanent upgrades to streets, including widening sidewalks, adding greenery, and implementing traffic-calming measures.

HOLD

- Upgrade designated areas for small businesses, offering tax incentives or subsidies for local entrepreneurs.
- Partner with developers to create housing with ground-floor retail and proximity to public amenities.
- Construct permanent amenities such as public restrooms, shaded seating areas, and drinking water fountains.

EXPERIENCE

- Establish self-guided cultural trails with markers, murals, and QR codes that tell the history of Independence Avenue and the Windhoek CBD.
- Develop pocket parks and rooftop gardens in vacant spaces. Use native plants for sustainability.

LONG TERM (5-10 YEARS)

Focus: Establishing Windhoek CBD as a fully revitalized and self-sustaining urban hub.

CONNECT

- Develop inter and intra-city transit hubs connecting regional and local transport systems; integrated with smart technologies, such as real-time transit updates.

HOLD

- Create business incubation centres offering mentorship and funding to local entrepreneurs.
- Expand affordable and social housing to ensure inclusivity and equity in the CBD.
- Build permanent, well-equipped market spaces for informal traders and small businesses.

EXPERIENCE

- Create cultural experiences by showcasing Namibian art, music, and heritage.
- Connect all public parks and green spaces through pedestrian-friendly corridors and shaded pathways.
- Partner with local organisations to host regular festivals, exhibitions, and pop-up activities.

Monitoring & evaluation

1. Increase in foot traffic and business activity in the CBD.
2. Growth in the number of small businesses and informal traders operating sustainably.
3. Improved public perception of safety and accessibility.
4. Uptake of new housing units and amenities.

Key stakeholders

- **City of Windhoek Municipality** to provide regulatory support, and land and infrastructure investments to drive economic growth.
- **Local businesses and SMMEs** participate in planning and benefit from new opportunities and resources.
- **Community organisations and cultural groups** plan cultural events and initiatives that boost local pride and visitor engagement.
- **Financial institutions and investors** offer financial support and incentives for small businesses and sustainable urban development projects.
- **PPPs** to collaborate with private developers and businesses for funding and expertise.
- Involve civic organizations in public space programming.
- **Urban planners, designers and architects design** inclusive and adaptable spaces that reflect the unique character of Windhoek to accommodate a variety of economic activities.

CONCLUSION

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, this research project focused on different phasing interventions that can better sustain the local economy of the Windhoek CBD. By focusing on the principles of accessibility, connectivity, optionality and inclusivity, the public realm of the Windhoek CBD can be reimagined into a thriving, vibrant and economically sustainable hub for local businesses, and small medium and micro enterprises and creating spaces that foster and sustain innovation, and creativity and support entrepreneurial visions and provocations. By reimagining the Windhoek CBD into a 24-hour business hub, it caters to commuters into the CBD, walking to get a morning coffee, students who need the resources to begin a start-up, employees who knock off from work late at night and want a quick meal on their way to the bus stop. The implementation of the project looks to engage various stakeholders like the City of Windhoek and, the Ministry of Industry and Trade to incentivise private property owners to be more inclusive of local economies. By prioritising the public realm, this research project creates a system that can sustain the existing businesses, reinforce the importance of Independence avenue and allow for future development.

Ethical considerations

The information for this research project was obtained ethically as:

1. Participants were informed of the reason for the study before their participation.
2. All interviews were conducted with the consent of the research participants.
3. Any personal information shared was hidden to promote anonymity.
4. All site visits to the Windhoek CBD were done respectfully without compromising the dignity of individuals.
5. Furthermore, all participants will have access to the research project via the UCT Open Portal website.
6. The perspectives of small business owners, informal traders, and retail workers were included to promote inclusivity in information gathering.



“As we envision a future for Independence Avenue, I hope we can create an environment that honours its past while embracing the possibilities of tomorrow. May we foster a Windhoek CBD that not only supports economic vitality but also nurtures community spirit, inclusivity, and resilience. This is a shared journey, and I believe that together, we can turn the tide for our beloved city.”

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ETHICS APPROVAL

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I, Gwen Persaud, (student number PRSFRI001), hereby declare that;

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong.
2. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.
3. I have used the APA convention for citation and referencing.
4. Each contribution to, and quotation in this research proposal from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced. Any section taken from an internet source has been referenced to that source.
5. This research proposal is my own work.
6. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

Additionally, there was use of indesign for presentation formatting, illustrator for images and QGIS for mapping. As well as ChatGPT as a tool for media creation, editing and concept development.

Signature: G. Persaud

Date: 20/11/2024

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DECLARATION

I, Gwen Persaud, (student number PRSFRI001), hereby declare that I have paraphrased some of my own words in this research project using Grammarly and ChatGPT.

Signature: G. Persaud

Date: 20/11/2024



2024/06/07

EBE/00875/2024

RE: Research Ethics Committee Project Approval Letter

Dear Frieda Persaud,

Your application for ethics review of your project titled

Broken Down: Re-imagining the urban design of Central Business Districts to sustain local economic development. A case study of Independence Avenue, Windhoek, Namibia.

has been reviewed and evaluated by the

Engineering & Built Environment Committee.

You may proceed with your research project titled:

Broken Down: Re-imagining the urban design of Central Business Districts to sustain local economic development. A case study of Independence Avenue, Windhoek, Namibia.

Expiration date of approval: 2024/12/31

Please note that should:

- (i) any serious or adverse effects to participants occur and/or,
- (ii) aspect(s) of your current project change and/or
- (iii) any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project occur then you should immediately report this to the approving REC. You may be required to submit an amendment to this application, in order to determine whether the changed aspects increase the ethical risks of your project.

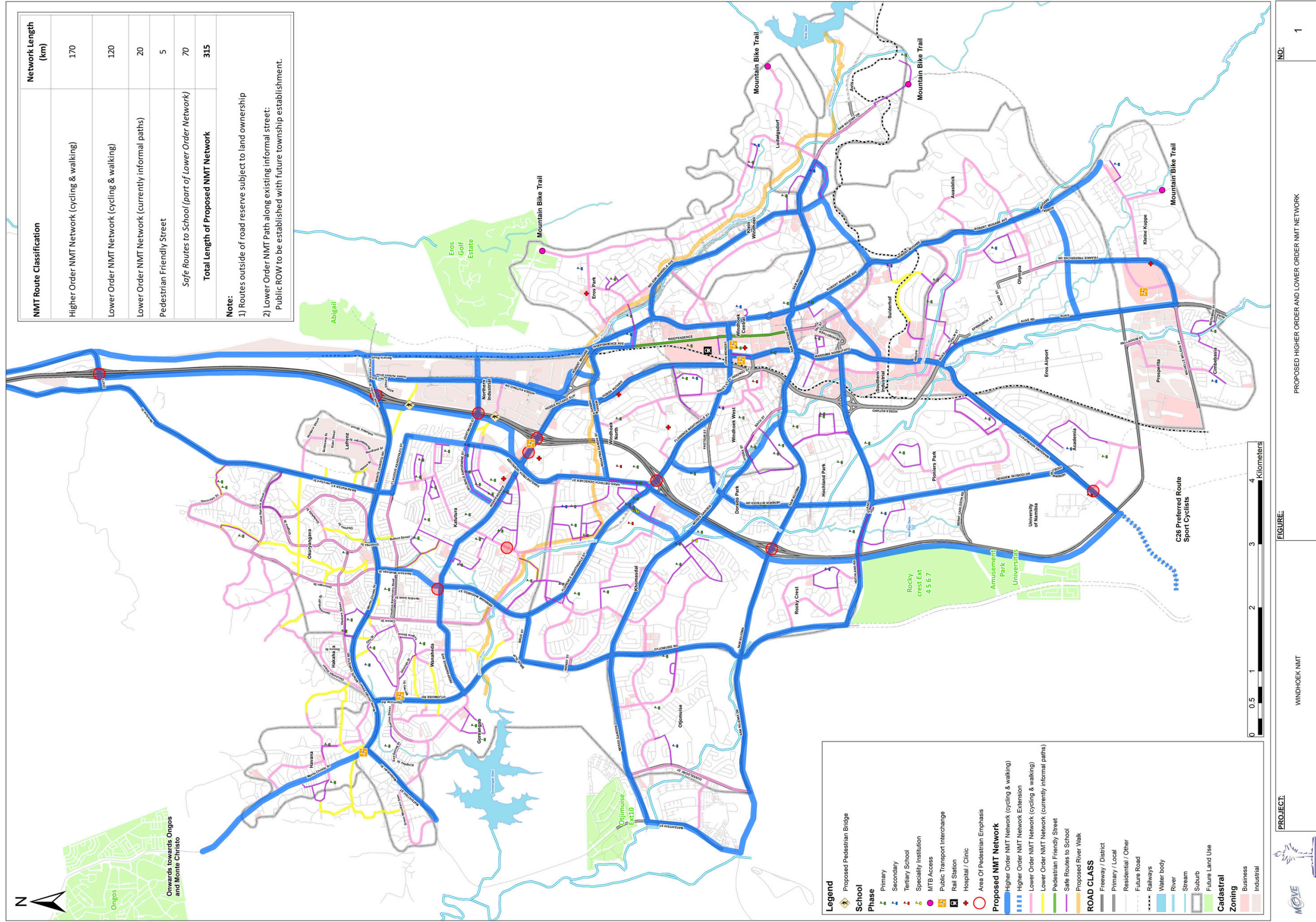
Based on the information supplied your application has been successful and is approved.

Please note the following additional conditions associated with this approval:

- (i) It is a bit unclear what the role of photographs and videos is in the methodology, and the consent form doesn't include the opportunity of interviewees to opt out of being photographed or filmed, but this could be because the place of visual data collection is distinct from the interviews. It might be a good idea to clarify this.
In addition, a bit more information on who the interviewees will be could be useful. The interview schedule lists professionals and pedestrians but this is not elaborated in the application. This point is for discussion with the supervisor.
A substantive question, also for discussion with your supervisor, is why professionals are not asked about their experiences of the street. Is it assumed that they don't frequent Independence Avenue? Why? Finally, the reviewer noted that a literature recommendation that might be inspiring is Ato Quayson's Oxford Street, Accra.

Regards,

Engineering & Built Environment Committee.



Source: City of Windhoek

CHECKLIST TO ASSESS PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

| DESCRIPTION | YES | NO | DESCRIPTION | YES | NO |
|--|-------------------|----|---|-----|----|
| Sidewalk Width and Quality | | | Crosswalks and Signalization | | |
| Are sidewalks wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic comfortably? | ✓ | | Are crosswalks clearly marked and visible to pedestrians and motorists? | ✓ | |
| Is the pavement in good condition, free from cracks, potholes, or obstructions? | ✓ | | Are there pedestrian crossing signals or countdown timers to indicate safe crossing times? | ✓ | |
| Are there tactile paving indicators for visually impaired pedestrians at crossings and intersections? | ✓ | | Is there adequate signage and lighting at crossings to enhance pedestrian safety? | ✓ | |
| Street Furniture and Amenities: | | | Greenery and Landscaping | | |
| Are there benches, seating areas, or rest stops along Independence Avenue for pedestrians? | | ✓ | Are there trees, planters, or green spaces along Independence Avenue to enhance the aesthetic appeal? | ✓ | |
| Are there public amenities such as trash bins, bicycle racks, or drinking fountains available? | yes to trash bins | ✓ | Is there landscaping or vegetation that provides visual interest and contributes to a sense of place? | ✓ | |
| Are there shelters or canopies to provide shade and protection from the elements? | ✓ | | Are there opportunities to incorporate more greenery to improve air quality and create a more inviting environment? | ✓ | |
| Building Facades and Activation: | | | Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Priority: | | |
| Do buildings along Independence Avenue have active ground-floor uses, such as shops, cafes, or galleries? | ✓ | | Are there measures in place to reduce vehicle speeds and prioritize pedestrian safety? | | ✓ |
| Are there windows, entrances, and façade treatments that engage pedestrians and create visual interest? | | ✓ | Are there designated pedestrian zones or shared spaces where vehicles are limited or restricted? | ✓ | |
| Is there signage, displays, or artwork that contributes to the overall character and identity of the street? | | ✓ | Is there adequate separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic to minimize conflicts and enhance comfort? | ✓ | |

| Accessibility and Inclusivity: | | Pedestrian Activity and Social Interaction | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Is Independence Avenue accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and mobility levels? | ✓ | Observe the level of pedestrian activity along Independence Avenue at different times of the day. | |
| Are there ramps, curb cuts, or other accessibility features to accommodate wheelchair users and individuals with mobility impairments? | ✓ | | |
| Are there provisions for inclusive design elements, such as tactile paving, audible signals, or seating areas that cater to diverse needs? | | | ✓ |
| Note any areas or features that attract pedestrians and foster social interaction. | | | |

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Pedestrians:



Background and Demographics:

1. Can you tell me a bit about **yourself**? (Age, gender, occupation)
2. What are the **main reasons** for your visits to Independence Avenue? (Shopping, work, leisure, dining, etc.)
3. **How often** do you visit Independence Avenue? (Daily, weekly, occasionally)
4. **How often** do you visit shopping Malls? (Daily, weekly, occasionally)
 - a. Why do you prefer the mall and vice versa? (Close to work/home etc.)
5. How do you usually **get to** Independence Avenue? (Walking, driving, taxi)

Pedestrian Experience:

6. How would you describe the **current state of pedestrian infrastructure** on Independence Avenue? (Sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, signage, seating shading restrooms)
7. Do you feel **safe** walking along Independence Avenue? (Daytime and nighttime experiences, safety concerns)
8. Do you come to Independence **after 17h00**?
9. How do you perceive the **role of local businesses in shaping the character** and vitality of Independence Avenue?
10. How do you perceive the **variety and quality of businesses** on Independence Avenue? (Shops, restaurants, services)
11. Would you **live** in Independence Avenue?

Ideas for Improvement and Suggestions:

12. What changes would you like to see in the **physical environment** to improve your experience as a pedestrian? (More seating, better lighting, cleaner streets)
13. What types of **events or activities would encourage you to visit** Independence Avenue more often?
14. What do you think could **attract more customers** to Independence to support the businesses and the local economy?
15. Are there any areas that you think **the most improvement** along Independence?
16. What changes could **City of Windhoek** make to improve your experiences here as a pedestrians?

Any additional thoughts, suggestions or experiences to make Independence Avenue more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly?

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Pedestrians:



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1. Can you tell me a bit about **yourself**? (Age, gender, occupation)
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Any additional thoughts, suggestions or experiences to make Independence Avenue more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly?

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Business Owners:

B1



Business type:

1. Can you tell me about your **business** and how long you have been operating in the Windhoek CBD? *(Can you tell me about your business? What type of business do you operate? How long have you been operating here? Why did you choose to establish your business on Independence Avenue?)*
2. Can you describe your day to day as a business owner along Independence? *(How do you get to Independence? Who are your main customers? What time are you busiest and least busy?)*
3. What factors influenced your **decision to establish your business** on Independence Avenue? *(How has the location impacted your business?)*
4. What are the **main challenges** you face operating your business in this area? *(Have these challenges changed over time? How do these challenges affect your day-to-day operations? How has the emergence of shopping malls and suburban development affected your business?)*
5. Have you considered **relocating** to a shopping mall or closing your shop? *(Do you have another shop? How are the sales for that shop?)*
6. What **marketing or business strategies** have you implemented to attract customers and sustain business? *(Have they been effective?)*

Pedestrian activity:

7. What is your **observation of customer and pedestrian activity** along Independence Avenue? *(Are there specific times of the day when pedestrian traffic is higher or lower? How does pedestrian activity impact your business? How would you describe the current state of pedestrian infrastructure and public spaces here?)*
8. Have you noticed a **change in customer foot traffic** over the years? *(What impact has this had on your revenue and customer base? Are you satisfied with your sales in recent years? What is your experience with the rental costs on Independence Avenue?)*
9. How do the **property managers** of your shop influence your business? How have rental costs changed over the years? *(How does this impact your business sustainability?)*
10. How is the current state of Independence? *(Are there enough amenities, facilities and infrastructure (e.g., seating, lighting, signage) for you and your customers?)*
11. How would you describe the **safety** for customers and business owners in the area? *(Do you feel that the area is safe and accessible for all age groups? Are there any safety concerns that need to be addressed? How accessible is the area for people with disabilities or the elderly?)*

Ideas for Improvement and Future Development

12. What do you think could **attract more customers** to Independence to support your business and the local economy? *(How could the physical environment be improved to attract more customers? What types of activities or events could be introduced to attract more pedestrians?)*
13. Are there any areas that you think **the most improvement** along Independence?
14. What changes could **City of Windhoek** make to improve your experiences here as a business owner? *(What kind of support or initiatives would be most helpful from local authorities?)*
15. How does the lack of evening activity affect your business? Would you keep your shop **open after 17h00** if there were more potential customers walking at night?
16. Would you **downsize** to a more compact or temporary stall?
17. Would you be willing to **collaborate** with the community or other local businesses to sustain your business?
18. What are your **future plans** for your business along Independence?

Any additional thoughts, suggestions or experiences regarding your business along Independence Avenue?

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Professionals:

1. How would you assess the current state of Independence Avenue in terms of pedestrian activity and economic vitality?
2. What are the main challenges facing Independence Avenue in terms of urban design, pedestrian infrastructure, and economic development?
3. What factors have contributed to these challenges faced along Independence Avenue?
4. What strategies do you think could stimulate economic vitality through urban design along the CBD?
5. Can you share any successful interventions or projects that have been implemented to improve pedestrian activity and support local businesses?
6. Are there any ongoing or upcoming projects aimed at revitalizing Independence Avenue? (Urban design improvements, economic incentives, public events)
7. How does the city collaborate with local businesses, residents, and other stakeholders to improve the CBD?



Recommendations and Improvements:

8. What specific improvements in pedestrian infrastructure do you think are most needed on Independence Avenue? (Sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting)
9. Are there any areas that you think **the most improvement** along Independence?
10. What measures can be taken to better support local businesses and SMEs along Independence Avenue? (Incentives, marketing, business support services)
11. Are there any future plans for Independence Avenue and the Windhoek CBD? How do you see the area evolving over the next 5-10 years?

Additional Thoughts: Any additional thoughts, suggestions, or experiences regarding the revitalization of Independence Avenue?

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Business Owners:

Business type:

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2. Can you describe your day to day as a business owner along Independence? *(How do you get to Independence? Who are your main customers? What time are you busiest and least busy?)*
3. What factors influenced your **decision to establish your business** on Independence Avenue? *(How has the location impacted your business?)*
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Pedestrian activity:

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11. How would you describe the **safety** for customers and business owners in the area? *(Do you feel that the area is safe and accessible for all age groups? Are there any safety concerns that need to be addressed? How accessible is the area for people with disabilities or the elderly?)*

Ideas for Improvement and Future Development

12. What do you think could **attract more customers** to Independence to support your business and the local economy? *(How could the physical environment be improved to attract more customers? What types of activities or events could be introduced to attract more pedestrians?)*
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Any additional thoughts, suggestions or experiences regarding your business along Independence Avenue?

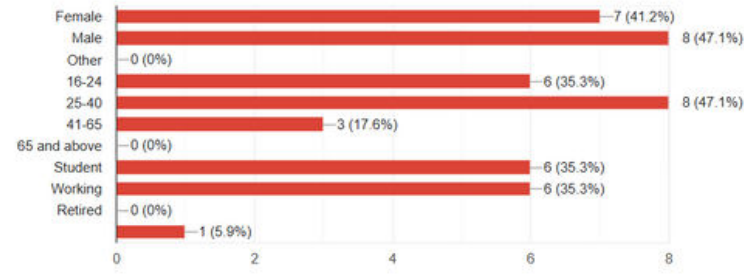
B1



PEDESTRIAN SURVEYS

A. Can you tell me a bit about yourself? (Age, gender, occupation)

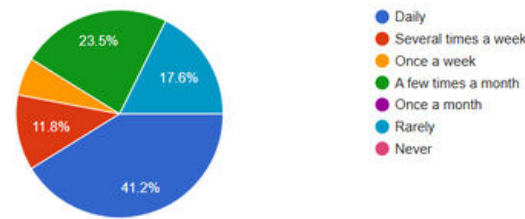
17 responses



Copy chart

B. How often do you visit Independence Avenue?

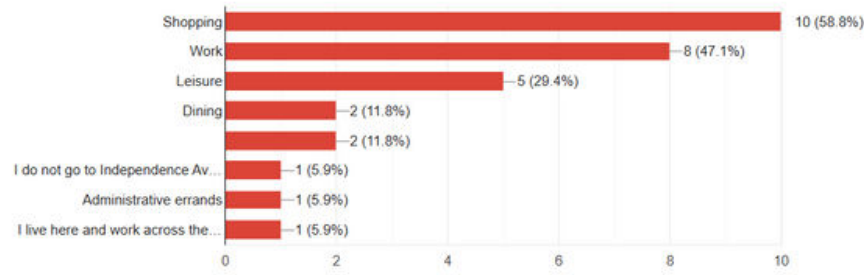
17 responses



Copy chart

C. What are the main reasons for your visits to Independence Avenue?

17 responses



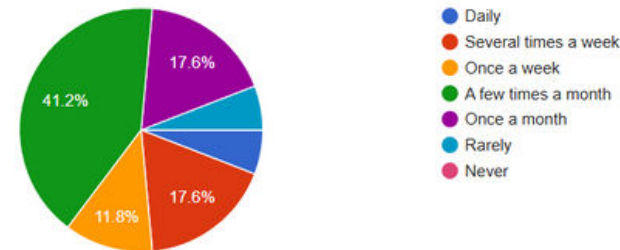
C.1. If other, what other reasons?

6 responses

- None
- Live
- I live here and work across the street
- Banking
- Accessing services such as banking and post services. But I changed bank branch to Maerua Mall to avoid going to CBD.
- I reside on 77 Independence Avenue

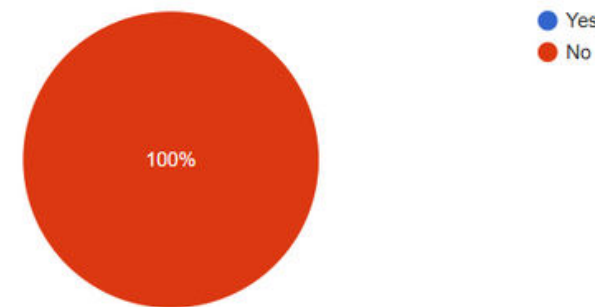
D. How often do you visit shopping Malls?

17 responses



E. I prefer Independence Avenue over a shopping mall.

17 responses



The malls are safer and more convenient and you have access to more shops. Independence is a lot more cramped, parking is a huge problem for me cause there is limited space and also they charge for parking. Most of the stores and places I go to are also usually crowded with people so it makes it a very uncomfortable/ lengthy experience for me on independence avenue.

Limited availability of desired stores
It would be easier to shop in mall than independence avenue due to convenience, variety of options provided for in a shopping mall that is missing from independence avenue

Safety issues. It also doesn't cater to most of my needs and wants the way a shopping mall does.

A shopping mall is convenient as there are more functions and services than that in independence Avenue alone.

The Grove Mall is more convenient

Not all services and shops are available along independence Avenue

You can find all that you need on Independence Avenue, even if you could, it is still better to just go to one central place where you can find all that you need.

Independence avenue is a route to car list, or wernhill, but very few actual shops in the street itself, maybe pharmacies Sicilas, Monieko, slowtown zoo park, Vinyls only

Having to pay for parking and being harassed by car guards to watch the car.

It's not aesthetically pleasing. Hardly no parking and if so, ridiculous parking fees. Inconvenient shops in the area. They can add more shops at Weck & Voigst.

Limited and costly parking

Parking fees

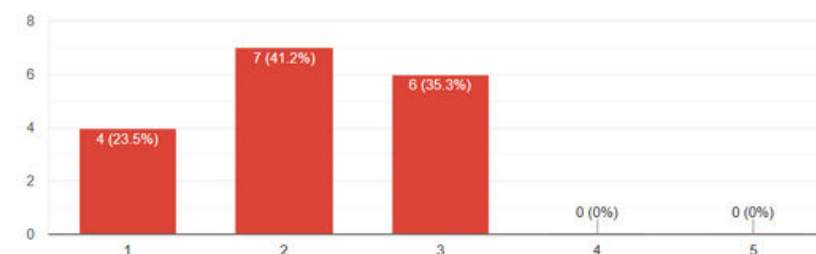
Malls offer a variety of products and services compared to Independence Avenue

Pedestrian Experiences

Copy chart

A. How do you perceive the current role of local businesses in shaping the character and vitality of Independence Avenue?

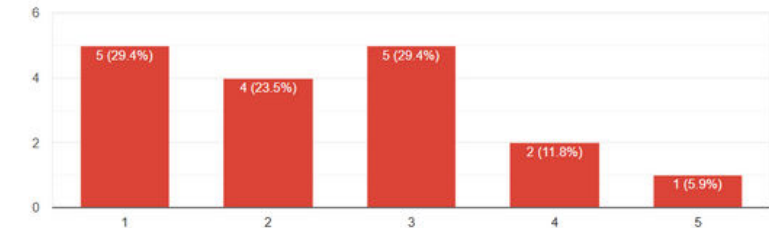
17 responses



B. How would you describe the current state of pedestrian infrastructure and amenities on Independence Avenue? (sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, signage, seating, shade, restrooms etc.)

Copy chart

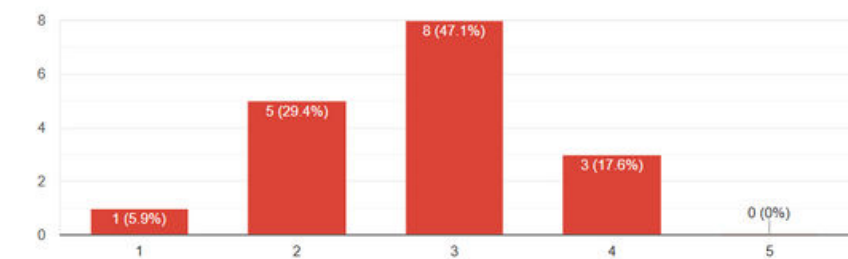
17 responses



C. How do you perceive the variety and quality of businesses on Independence Avenue? (shops, restaurants, services)

Copy chart

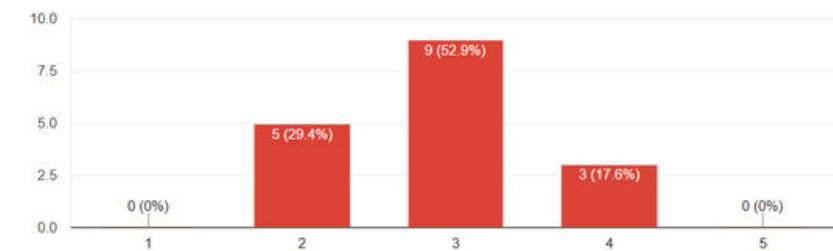
17 responses



D. How safe do you feel walking along Independence Avenue? (daytime and nighttime experiences, safety concerns)

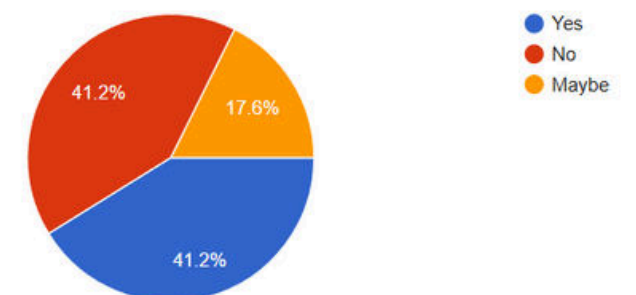
Copy chart

17 responses



E. Do you ever visit Independence after 17h00?

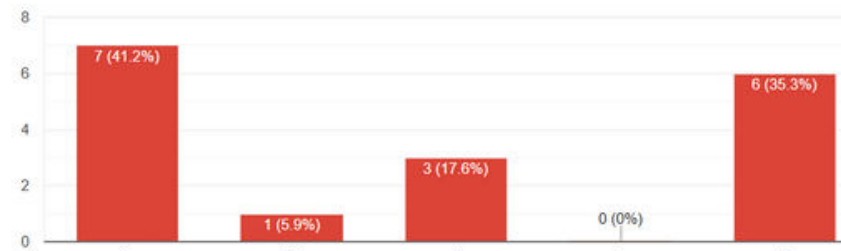
17 responses



F. How likely are you to live along Independence Avenue?

Copy chart

17 responses



Ideas for Improvement and Suggestions:

A. What changes would you like to see in the physical environment to improve your experience as a pedestrian?

More black Namibian owned shops
 Better seating amenities not just in front of businesses but for passive living, like for people that walk around. I'd like to see less overhangs and more natural interventions like tree shading. Honestly can we remove parking??? I feel like the CBD should be a car free zone with no cars there, like just people walking and maybe emergency and delivery vehicles are the only ones allowed in
 Upgrade to the servitude to allow more accessibility
 Outdoor furniture and onstreet restaurants synchronised with traffic to enhance experience for users.
 Install more benches where pedestrians can rest
 N
 Enhanced sitting infrastructure, more shade and plantings and defined and designated pedestrian walkway. Creation of an aesthetically pleasing walk through integration of public art green infrastructure etc..
 More pedestrian crossings
 Increase access to crossing points
 Proper crossings prioritizing pedestrians than vehicles.
 The area needs a face-lift, there are a lot of "tired" buildings that need to be modernised. Plus some sitting areas would be good too.
 Pedestrianisation, trees, seating, childrens play, improved zoo park,
 More leisure places to sit and relax without having to worry whether the person at the next table is not a criminal.
 They need to paint some buildings especially this side of Sicilia. They need to remove the homeless people around Spur/kfc, they scare people when they are high and they are in the road making driving uncomfortable. Tourists also need to feel free.
 More shops and cafe's along Independence. I
 Free parking, restaurants with different cuisine, ablution facilities. Cleanliness and no street vendors
 Culture
 Shaded seating

B. What types of events or activities would encourage you to visit Independence Avenue more often?

None. I like staying in the house
 Open markets, concerts, walkathons, activities that can take place in the street would be nice,
 Adverts
 Leisure and blow off some steam via outdoor experience of a buzzing street full of options to take my mind off things.
 Entertainment
 Night life
 Examples are the activities hosted by the City of Windhoek- spring day, market day etc.
 Local markets
 Block Festivals/ Street Markets: Canivarls
 The current plethora of activities are great but more improvements are need to make the main CBD street attractive and not become a ghost street in future.
 More sports broadcasts such as the Brave Warriors games during the AfCoN. There are more sports that can attract variety of sports lovers. More events such as the AMIS Day Club that took place at the City of Windhoek parking. That was by far the best venue to ever host the AMIS Day Club, which highlights the potential of the space for entertainment events.
 Street food, markets, theatre, music,
 Kid friendly events often, more police patrol presence.
 Markets and kiddies events, marathons.
 City markets, art shows, and exhibitions
 Cultural events, bazaars and fairs
 Conventional physical games

C. What do you think could attract more customers to Independence to support the businesses and the local economy?

A greater variety of shops and better access to parking
 I think enhancing the streetscape...hence I say less cars more people, because for local businesses they depend a whole lot on foot traffic so increasing that can improve the support for the businesses.
 Cleanliness
 Above suggestions
 More shopping and dining options that cater to different income groups
 Activities at night
 It would be the Provision of a diverse number of services. I will go to the place where I have the most services or functions in closer proximity to eachother. It is diverse to some extent however it majors in more administrative and official functions than retail and business.
 More shops
 Upgrading the look and feel
 Better and well maintained outlets, welcoming environment and easily accessible facilities.
 Better marketing, there are some hidden gems along the road.
 Free parking, and the above activities
 Festivals marketing local businesses and police presence.
 Internet cafe, food stalls/shops different cuisines, cafes, bakery
 Free parking
 Answer is in part b
 More Space, most of the times I want to buy from local traders I can't because I'll block the walkway.

D. What areas along Independence Avenue or the Windhoek CBD do you think needs the most improvement?

I can't say
 The area from FNB to Hilton hotel is nice, it's really just overcrowding and too many cars. I think from city of Windhoek to the circle it's kind of dead, there's a lot of opportunity there I think.
 Pavements
 Not sure on specifics
 The area around the old home affair building and Zoo park.
 Zoo park
 Stretch it beyond Hilton and FNB John Meinert. Create a continuity of attractiveness, greenery and pedestrian friendliness throughout the avenue/ CBD.
 Dining places
 The area across the Hilton Parking
 Food outlets, salon and barbershops..
 The buildings, especially as you head north from Zoo Park. In fact, Zoo Park itself needs to be revived.
 Close the gambling around auspanplatz. Zoo park renovation, the area by old home affairs and hungry lion is awful after dark.
 Zoo Park (must be more attractive and green of course), old OK parking (reorganize the vendors there) and remove the car guards, add signage about not littering and spitting on the tar / floor
 The area of Sicilia/universal church buildings need paint. Kfc/Hungry lion area

Any additional thoughts, suggestions or experiences to make Independence Avenue more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly?

Nope
 None
 More food places along Independence (if you see this just know I'm super proud of you xoxo)
 Less street vendors along the side of the road to avoid overcrowding
 Non
 Renovate the old buildings to make it more visually appealing.
 Improve safety
 more lights in the night time
 Waste bins should be made available and emptied all the time. Make all crossings with pedestrians priority and not vehicles first, give enough time to pedestrians.
 We need more greenery. Plants, trees, etc.
 Empty office blocks need to become residential, marensky, 77 and city junction did well to break the apartheid design of the city, but more residents will make the city more vibrant. Rents imposed by german owners are too high. Street kids and dronkies need help and rehab to stop harassing people, urinating in public and generally being unsupervised policed. So, more police in independence ave
 Spontaneous open music shows
 Screens like new york city, Town Square. By city of Windhoek. Further down by the banking Buildings - make it more like wall street. Make Independence aesthetically pleasing to attract more tourists and shops that are convenient and necessary.
 Food stalls different, cuisines. Ice cream shop, internet cafe.
 Restaurants, cafes and other eateries will make it more convenient
 More POS along the street... Hard of soft regardless.

CONSENT FORM

Participant Informed Consent form:

Broken Down: Re-imagining the urban design of Central Business Districts to sustain local economic development. A case study of Independence Avenue, Windhoek, Namibia.



Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in my Masters of Urban Design research project from the University of Cape Town. This mandatory research project explores approaches to use urban design interventions along Independence Avenue, Windhoek, to sustain local economic development within the Central Business District in Windhoek, Namibia. As such, your consent is required before partaking in this academic research. I take full responsibility for ensuring your confidentiality and anonymity. Your name and contact details are not required in this study. The researcher can assure you that no physical, psychological or emotional harm will be rendered to you during and after participation. I hereby consent to participate in this research project.

YES (Tick in the box below if you do consent to the research)

Date:

Participant signature:

Your voluntary contribution is highly appreciated. By completing this questionnaire, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

Should you have questions regarding the project, you may contact my supervisor at Kathryn.Ewing@uct.ac.za.