

JOHANNESBURG VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW (VLR) 2023/2024 — SUMMARY

1. Context

- This is the **first VLR** produced by the City of Johannesburg.
- It assesses the city's progress towards achieving the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Johannesburg's development strategy aligns with national frameworks (like South Africa's NDP) and global frameworks (SDGs, Agenda 2030, AU Agenda 2063).

2. Key Strengths and Challenges

- **Access to basic services** (water, electricity, sanitation) is high, reaching about **93%** of households.
- **Urban inequalities** persist, especially in **informal settlements** (19% of households live in informal housing).
- **Youth unemployment** and **poverty** remain critical challenges.
- Environmental concerns include **air quality issues** and **waste management** problems.
- **Public transport** access has improved, but safety and integration remain issues.

3. Strategic Priorities

The city's strategies are built around four main drivers:

- **Human and social development**
- **Environmental and infrastructure development**
- **Inclusive economic development**
- **Smart and high-performing metropolitan governance**

These aim to create a **resilient, sustainable, liveable, and globally competitive city** by 2040.

4. Focus on SDG 11 — Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Major work is ongoing to **upgrade informal settlements, expand safe public transport, and improve waste management**.
- Johannesburg connects SDG 11 with other SDGs like:
 - **Goal 1** (No poverty)
 - **Goal 2** (Zero hunger)
 - **Goal 6** (Clean water and sanitation)
 - **Goal 7** (Clean energy)
 - **Goal 13** (Climate action)
 - **Goal 16** (Peace, justice, strong institutions)
 - **Goal 17** (Partnerships for the Goals)

5. Community Engagement

- Extensive **stakeholder workshops** and community consultations were conducted.
- Citizens demand **greater transparency, better local governance, and real implementation** of community-proposed solutions.

6. Major Programs Highlighted

- **Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP)**: providing in-situ services and secure tenure.
- **Smart City Strategy**: focusing on digital infrastructure, public WiFi, smart transport, and smart policing (e.g., camera systems with Vumacam).
- **Food security initiatives**: establishing urban gardens, food hubs, and agro-processing support.
- **Expanded Social Package (ESP)**: supporting vulnerable households with free or subsidized basic services.
- **Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP)**: creating job opportunities, especially for youth and women.

7. Way Forward

- Johannesburg will continue to integrate the SDGs into its annual **Integrated Development Plan (IDP)** reviews.
- Strengthen **multi-stakeholder partnerships** (private sector, NGOs, communities).
- Prioritize **inclusive development, resilience building, and climate adaptation**.

- Develop **smart data systems** to track SDG progress more accurately and transparently.

In short, the City of Johannesburg aims to become a **leading African smart, inclusive, resilient city by 2040**, but faces major structural and social challenges it must tackle with innovation, collaboration, and long-term planning.

Focus on SDG 11 — Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 11 aims to make cities and human settlements **inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable**. For Johannesburg, this goal is central because access to **basic services** (water, electricity, sanitation) is part of the city's **core mandate**.

Target 11.1: Housing and Basic Services

- **Objective:** Ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and to upgrade slums by 2030.
- **Current Situation:**
 - **19%** of households in Johannesburg live in **slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing** (2022).
 - There is **persistent inequality**: many residents lack reliable access to water, electricity, and sanitation.
 - Some informal residents have created **illegal service connections** to access basic needs.
- **Progress:**
 - The proportion of households living in informal dwellings **decreased** from 21.5% in 2016 to 17.3% in 2021.
 - However, in **2022**, this figure rose again slightly to **19%**, mainly due to growing urban poverty.

Target 11.2: Transport and Public Access

- **Objective:** Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems.
- **Current Situation:**
 - **96%** of Johannesburg's population reportedly has **convenient access to public transport**.
 - Challenges persist with **safety, integration** of transport systems, and ensuring **coverage** across all areas.

Target 11.6: Waste Management

- **Objective:** Reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities, including municipal waste management.
- **Current Situation:**
 - Only **26%** of municipal solid waste is **diverted from landfill** (target: much higher).
 - Waste management remains a **major challenge** but some improvements have been recorded.

Key Actions and Programs Related to SDG 11

1. Upgrading Informal Settlements

- Programs like the **Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP)** aim to improve basic infrastructure and offer **secure tenure** without relocating communities.

2. Smart City Strategy

- Johannesburg is developing **Smart City initiatives** to enhance service delivery through **technology**, such as:
 - Public Wi-Fi networks
 - Intelligent Operations Centre (IIOC) for monitoring services
 - Use of AI and drones for urban management.

3. Urban Regeneration Projects

- **New social infrastructure** like community centers and parks is being built, especially in previously overcrowded townships.
- Goals: Improve **quality of life**, foster **skills growth**, and create **new employment opportunities**.

Interlinkages with Other SDGs

Achieving SDG 11 requires progress in other areas:

- **SDG 1:** No Poverty — access to affordable housing reduces poverty.
- **SDG 6:** Clean Water and Sanitation — basic services underpin sustainable cities.
- **SDG 13:** Climate Action — resilient cities must adapt to climate risks.
- **SDG 16:** Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions — inclusive governance fosters safe cities.

Challenges Remaining

- Persistent **urban poverty** and **youth unemployment** fuel the growth of informal settlements.
- **Inequality of service delivery** between affluent and poor areas.
- **Environmental sustainability** efforts (waste, air quality, energy use) need significant reinforcement.
- **Crime and safety** in public spaces remains a concern.

The Way Forward

- **Mainstreaming SDG 11** in the annual Integrated Development Plan (IDP).
- Strengthening **community engagement** to ensure no one is left behind.
- Improving **data collection** and **monitoring systems** (e.g., via Quality of Life Surveys).
- Investing more in **green infrastructure**, **resilient housing**, and **smart technology**.

Aspect	Status	Challenges	Progress
Housing & Informal Settlements	19% in informal housing	Urban poverty, inequality	Slight improvement (pre-2022)
Public Transport	96% access	Safety, coverage gaps	Stable
Waste Management	26% diverted	Low recycling rates	Slow progress
Basic Services Access	93% access	Informal areas lagging	Improved overall