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LAND ASSEMBLY STRATEGY

*A strategic, evidence-based framework for assembling land
for sustainable human settlements*

**City of Johannesburg: Department of Human Settlements
Directorate - Integrated Human Settlement Policy, Planning and Research**

March 2026



Executive Summary Booklet

City of Johannesburg Land Assembly Strategy (COJ LAS) 2026

Department of Human Settlements

Directorate - Integrated Human Settlement Policy, Planning and Research

Disclaimer

This Executive Summary Booklet presents a high-level overview of the City of Johannesburg's Land Assembly Strategy for strategic communication purposes only. It does not disclose site-specific information, land availability data, prioritised properties, or implementation decisions. All detailed technical analyses, datasets, spatial outputs and analytical tools informing the Strategy are managed internally by the City of Johannesburg and are subject to governance controls, legal requirements, and institutional decision-making processes. Nothing contained in this booklet should be construed as a commitment to release, develop, or dispose of any land or property



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| 01 WHY A LAND ASSEMBLY STRATEGY?

Responding to Urban Growth, Housing Need and National Policy Direction

Land remains the foundational input into human settlements delivery, yet it is finite, spatially fixed and subject to competing demands.

The City of Johannesburg Land Assembly Strategy (COJ LAS) has been developed in alignment with the National Land Assembly Policy (2020).

The national policy requires municipalities to prepare structured land assembly schedules and adopt a more coordinated approach to identifying, securing and preparing land for housing development.

The COJ LAS represents the City of Johannesburg's institutional response to national policy, ensuring that municipal land decisions align with broader human settlements reform objectives - including densification, integration and improved access to opportunity.



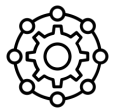


A Strategic Instrument for Coordinated Housing Development

The COJ LAS is a planning instrument that strengthens the City's human settlement's function.

The COJ LAS supports human settlements planning and development by:

- ✓ *Providing a citywide spatial intelligence base for housing planning*
- ✓ *Aligning land decisions with housing typologies, affordability segments and delivery mechanisms*
- ✓ *Enabling coordinated planning between housing programmes and infrastructure capacity*
- ✓ *Supporting pipeline planning across short-, medium- and long-term timeframes*
- ✓ *Strengthening defensibility and transparency in land-related decisions*



The COJ LAS **improves integration** between land assembly, spatial planning, infrastructure investment and human settlements programming.



By moving away from reactive, project-based land identification toward a **structured evidence-based approach**, the COJ LAS strengthens the City's ability to plan proactively for housing, infrastructure and long-term public investment.

A Customised and Innovative Approach

The COJ LAS is the first comprehensive Land Assembly Strategy for the City.

The methodology integrates:

Strategic Inputs

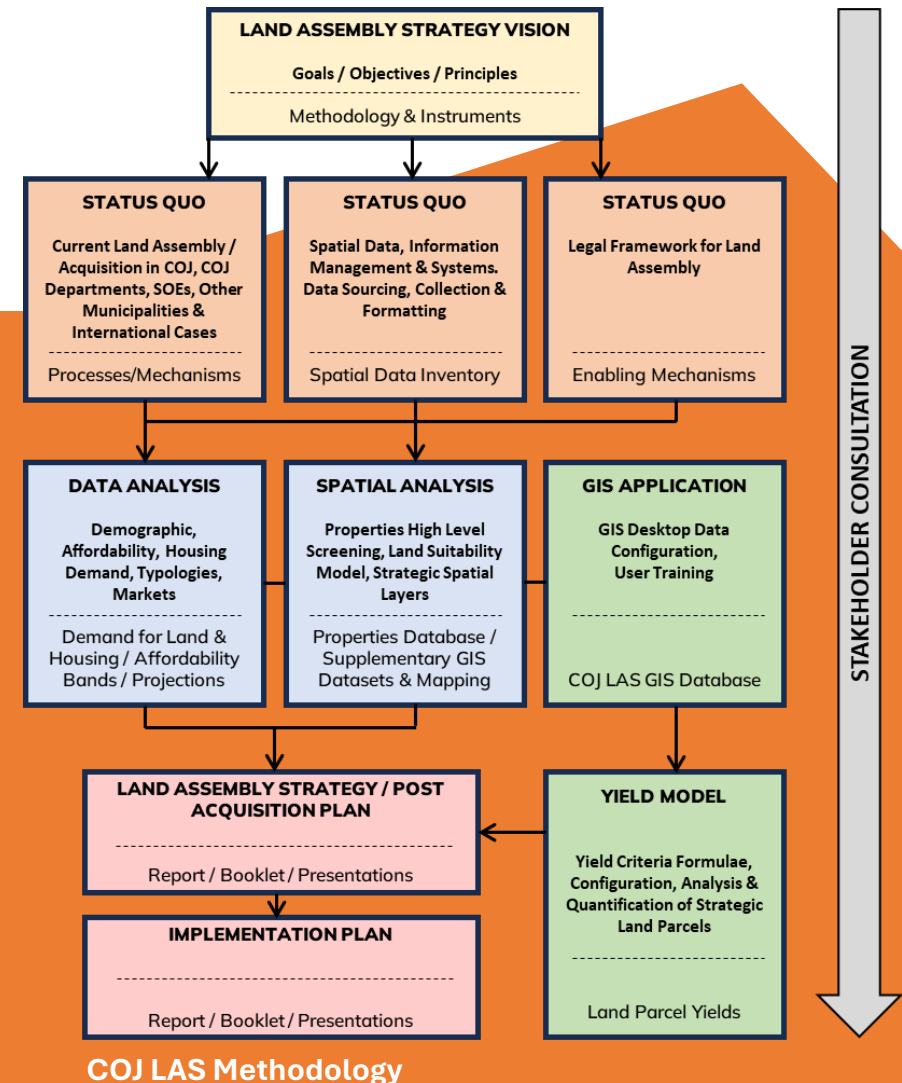
- ✓ *MSDF and Nodal Review Policy*
- ✓ *Public land records (municipal and other government)*
- ✓ *Demographic and housing demand analysis*

Analytical Processes

- ✓ *GIS-based high-level screening*
- ✓ *Spatial correlation and transformation modelling*
- ✓ *Demand and yield modelling*
- ✓ *Policy and constraint alignment*

Strategic Outputs

- ✓ *A structured property database*
- ✓ *Prioritisation logic*
- ✓ *Analytical tools to inform housing planning and land decisions*



COJ LAS Methodology

GIS as the Engine of Evidence-Based Land Assembly

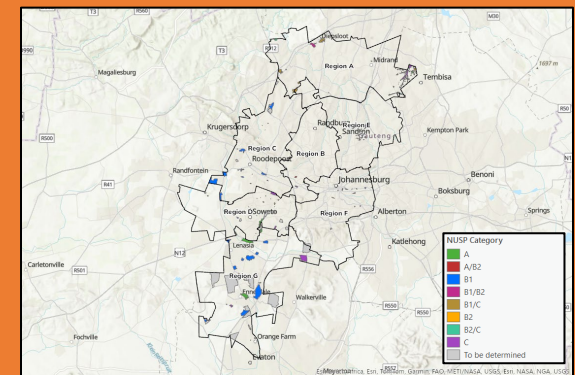
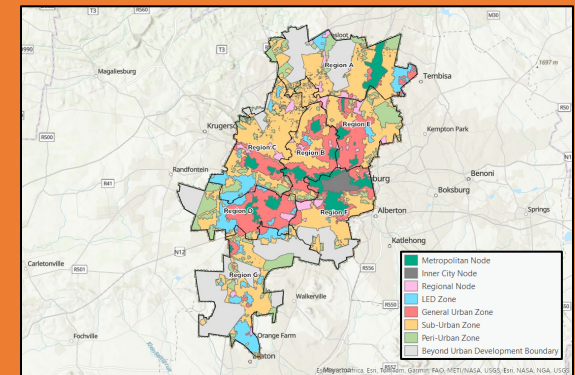
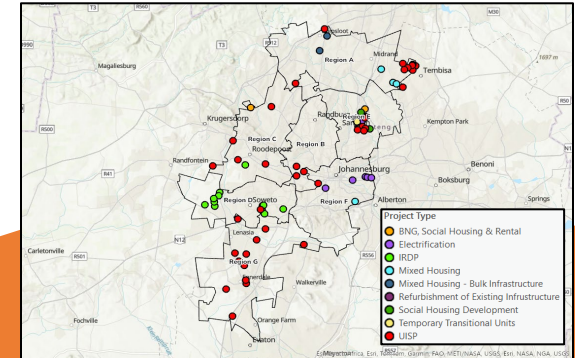
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) played a central role in the COJ Land Assembly Strategy. GIS provides the analytical engine that enables the City to move from fragmented land information toward a structured, citywide spatial intelligence framework.

Using GIS, the COJ LAS was able to:

- ✓ Consolidate municipal, provincial and national land records into a unified spatial database
- ✓ Apply consistent high-level screening criteria across thousands of land parcels
- ✓ Integrate environmental, infrastructural and regulatory constraint layers
- ✓ Test alignment with the MSDF, Nodal Review Policy & other spatial policy directives
- ✓ Conduct proximity and correlation analyses to support transformation priorities

GIS enables the City to analyse relationships between land, infrastructure, economic nodes, informal settlements and planning frameworks rather than assessing land parcels in isolation.

The GIS screening and assessment logic applied through the COJ LAS can be reproduced, updated and refined as new data becomes available.



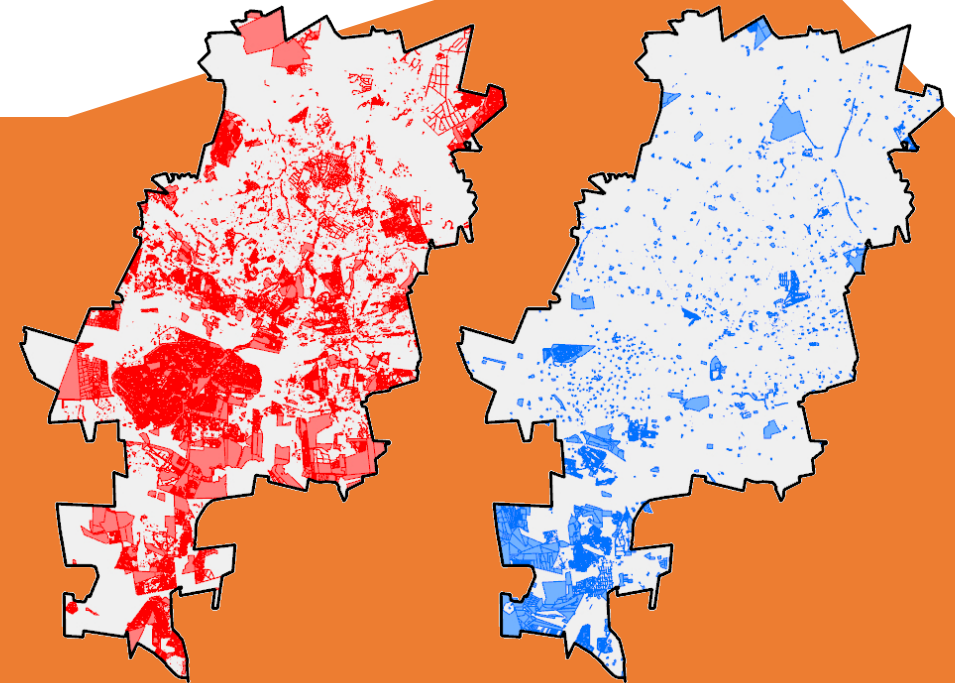
A Comprehensive Public Land Assessment

The Land Assembly Strategy cast the net wide across all public land within the City of Johannesburg, including:

- ✓ Council-Owned Land (COLA)
- ✓ Provincial and National Government Land (OTHER GOV)

Rather than focusing narrowly on municipal land alone, the COJ LAS assesses the full universe of public land within the municipal boundary.

The inclusion of Provincial and National Government land within the analytical framework strengthens the City's ability to engage constructively with other spheres of government. It provides a shared spatial evidence base through which coordinated land release, infrastructure planning and housing delivery discussions can occur.



Council Owned Land
(COLA)

Other Government Land
(OTHER GOV)

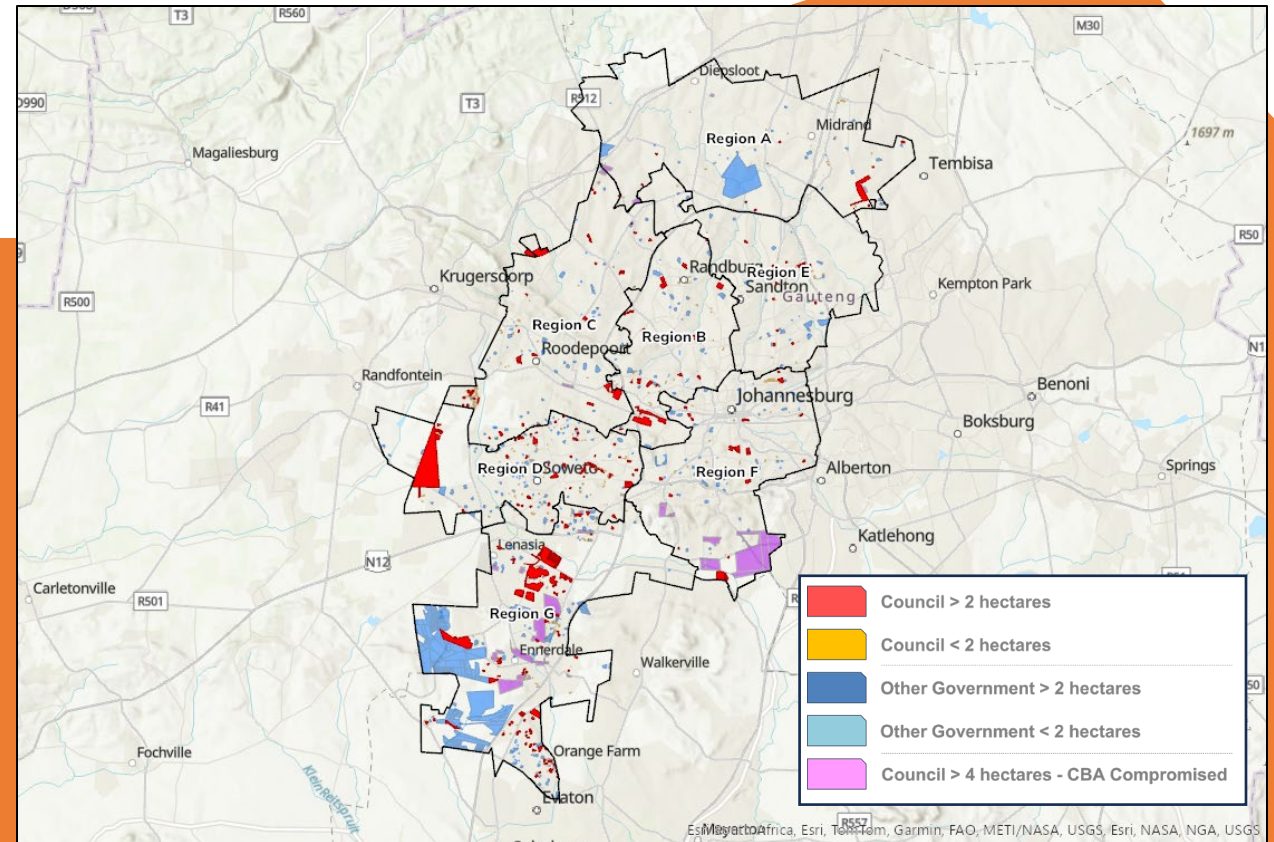
Citywide and Regional Quantitative Insights

A GIS-based High-Level Screening (HLS) undertaken as part of the COJ LAS assessed all public land within the municipal boundary including Council-Owned Land (COLA) and Other Government (OTHER GOV) land.

Citywide Overview

At a metropolitan scale, the analysis indicates:

- ✓ Approximately 12,774 hectares of public land (COLA & OTHER GOV combined) identified through initial screening
- ✓ Of this, approximately 6,427 hectares comprise Council-Owned Land (COLA)
- ✓ A subset of this land meets high-level screening criteria for potential human settlements consideration, subject to further assessment



Regional Distribution of Public Land

The COJ LAS provides regional breakdowns of COLA and OTHER GOV land across Regions A–G

| | COLA | | OTHER GOV | | TOTAL | |
|----------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | Total Area (HA) | ENDA (HA) | Total Area (HA) | ENDA (HA) | Total Area (HA) | ENDA (HA) |
| Region A | 280 | 107 | 1 036 | 321 | 1 316 | 428 |
| Region B | 359 | 122 | 189 | 60 | 548 | 182 |
| Region C | 499 | 201 | 225 | 83 | 725 | 285 |
| Region D | 1 185 | 411 | 301 | 105 | 1 486 | 516 |
| Region E | 95 | 43 | 188 | 59 | 283 | 102 |
| Region F | 1 729 | 663 | 206 | 75 | 1 934 | 738 |
| Region G | 2 280 | 873 | 4 202 | 1 968 | 6 482 | 2 841 |
| | 6 427 | 2 421 | 6 348 | 2 671 | 12 774 | 5 092 |

Strategic Observations

- ✓ Outer and peri-urban regions tend to reflect larger gross public land holdings
- ✓ More central and nodal regions show more limited land availability but higher strategic value for densification and integration
- ✓ The balance between projected housing demand and screened public land differs by region, requiring differentiated land assembly approaches
- ✓ In several regions, OTHER GOV land represents a significant proportion of total public land, reinforcing the importance of intergovernmental coordination

The Spatial Transformation Model (STM)

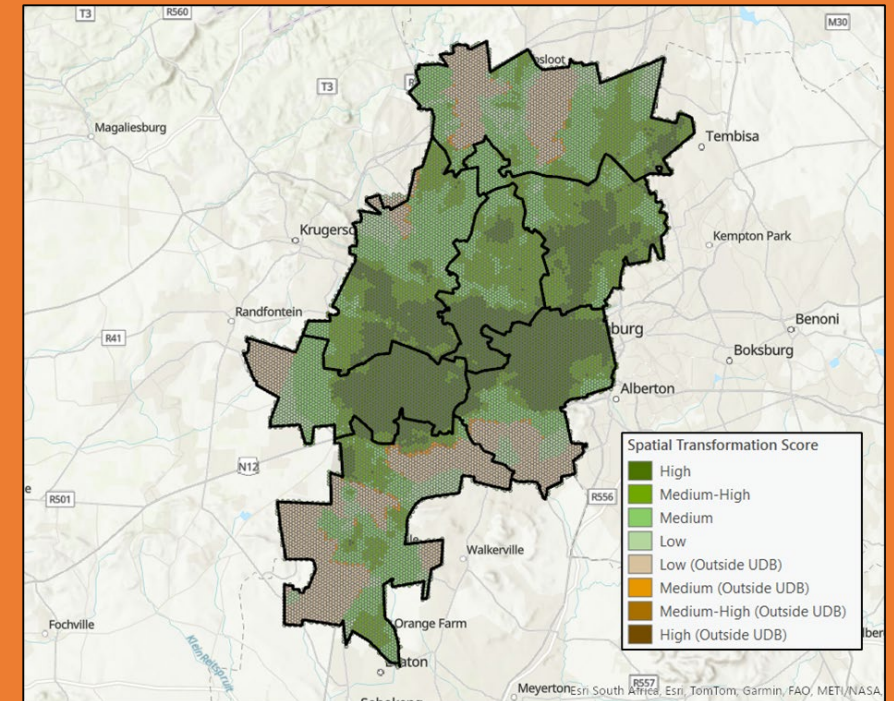
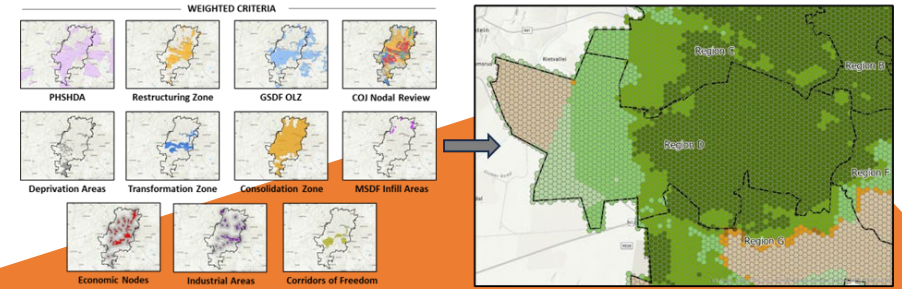
A key innovation of the COJ LAS is the development of a Spatial Transformation Model (STM), a customised analytical instrument designed specifically for the Land Assembly Strategy.

The STM integrates multiple spatial criteria to assess alignment with:

- ✓ Access to economic and industrial nodes
- ✓ MSDF and nodal restructuring objectives
- ✓ National and provincial human settlement directives
- ✓ Urban transformation priorities

By weighting and integrating these criteria, the STM strengthens the alignment between human settlements activities and broader city transformation objectives.

The STM ensures that land assembly is not simply about land availability, but about **advancing spatial restructuring, densification and integration.**



COJ LAS Spatial Transformation Model

Matching Housing Need to Land Potential

The COJ LAS has developed Excel-based analytical tools for Demand & Yield Modelling:



Demand Model

Estimates the scale and typology of housing need across income bands and regions, based on demographic and policy-aligned projections.



Yield Model

Tests what different land parcels can realistically deliver in terms of housing units and typologies, based on development parameters and planning assumptions.

Used together, these tools enable the City to:

- ✓ **Align housing typologies with appropriate spatial locations**
- ✓ **Scale housing responses relative to land potential**
- ✓ **Test development feasibility at a strategic level**
- ✓ **Ensure that projected housing demand can be matched with potential land supply**

From Strategic Identification to Land Release

While the COJ Land Assembly Strategy establishes the analytical and strategic foundation for land identification and prioritisation, land assembly within the City of Johannesburg follows a broader institutional process that guides how land moves from screening to development.

The City's Land Assembly Process comprises the following interconnected stages (see diagram on next page):

1. High-Level Land Identification Processes

- *Citywide screening and spatial analysis to identify potential public land aligned with spatial policy and transformation objectives*

2. High-Level Land Assessment Processes

- *Preliminary evaluation of identified land against planning, environmental, infrastructure and regulatory considerations*

3. Land Acquisition Policies and Strategies

- *Application of municipal and intergovernmental processes to allocate, secure or acquire land in accordance with governance frameworks*

4. Land Preparation, Packaging and Release Strategies

- *Project-level preparation, statutory approvals, infrastructure coordination and formal release for human settlements development*

From Strategic Identification to Land Release

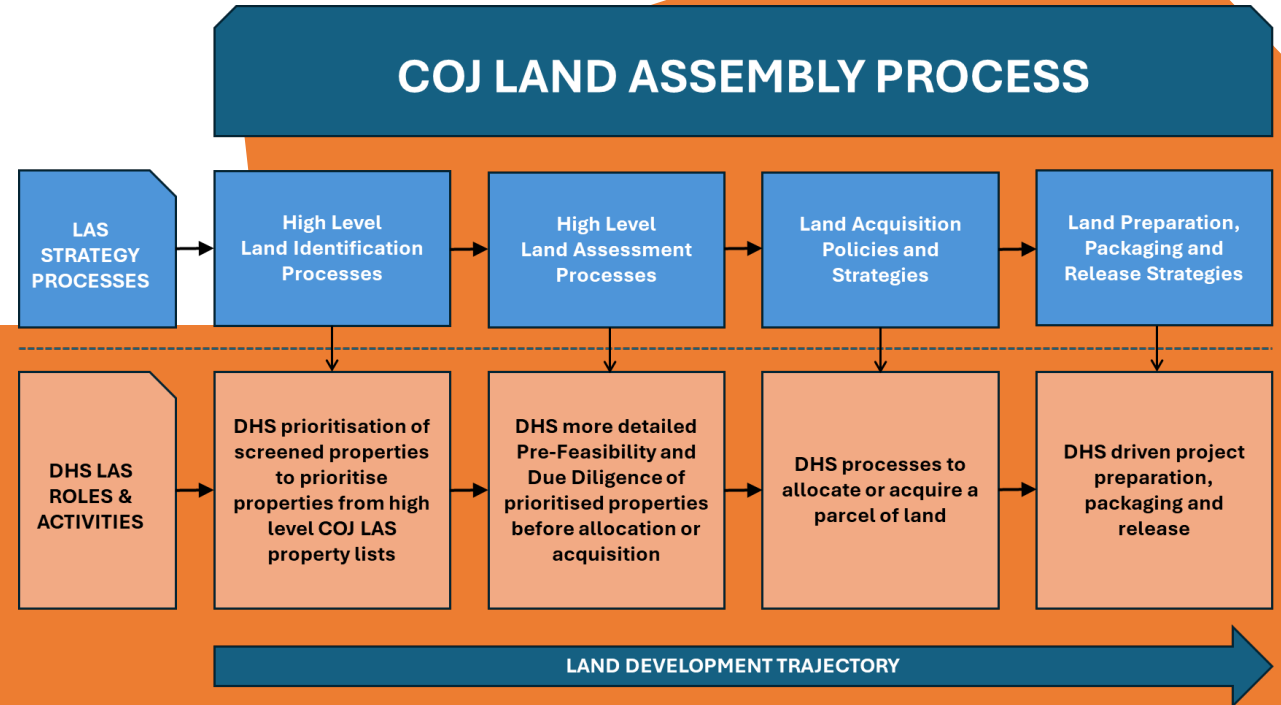
The COJ Land Assembly Strategy provides the structured framework for the strategic processes (blue row) in the City's Land Assembly trajectory

The operational activities (orange row) are undertaken by the Department of Human Settlements in accordance with governance and statutory processes.

Operational Activities include:

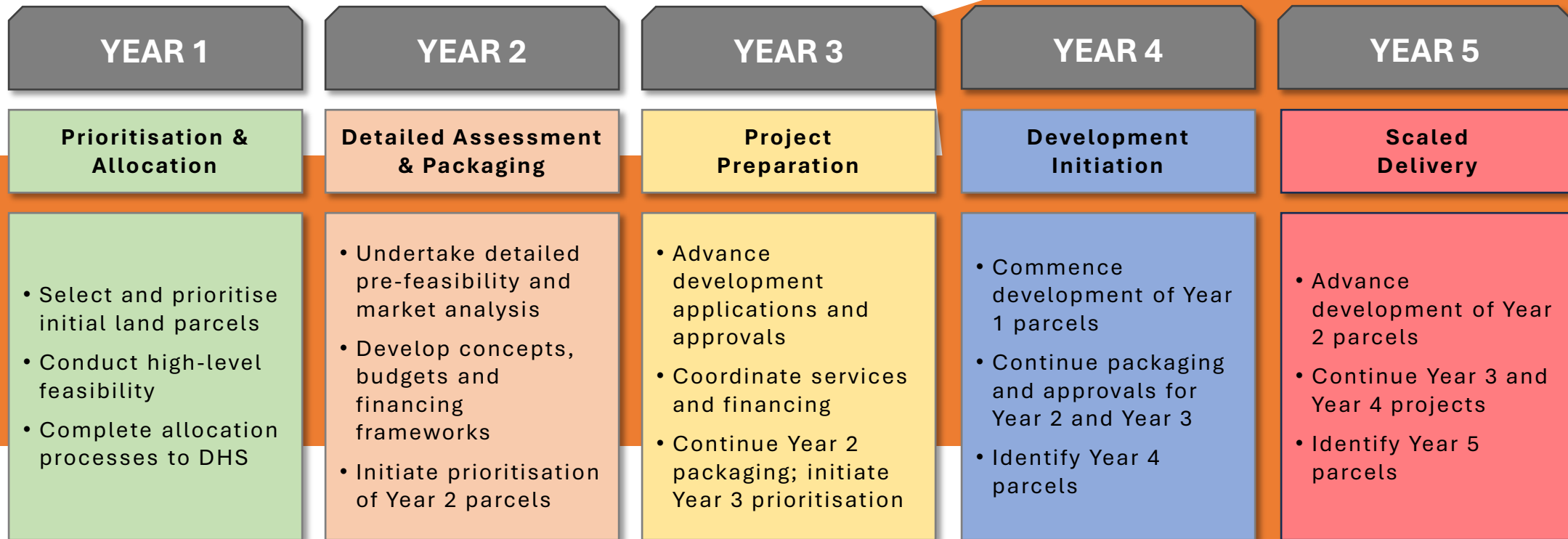
- ✓ **Prioritisation**
- ✓ **Pre-feasibility**
- ✓ **Due diligence**
- ✓ **Acquisition and project preparation**

The COJ LAS therefore strengthens the strategic foundation that serves to guide implementation within the Human Settlements department.



A Rolling 5-Year Programme

The COJ Land Assembly Strategy is implemented through a rolling five-year pipeline. Land parcels move progressively from prioritisation to development, ensuring continuity, coordination and alignment with budgeting cycles.



10 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (cont)

The rolling programme ensures that land assembly aligns with multi-year budgeting cycles, coordinates infrastructure and housing delivery, remains responsive to demographic and policy shifts, and prevents gaps between land identification and project implementation..

| LAND ASSEMBLY STAGE | YEAR 1 | YEAR 2 | YEAR 3 | YEAR 4 | YEAR 5 |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| Land Identification | Identify Year 1 priority land for allocation | Identify Year 2 priority land | Identify Year 3 priority land | Identify Year 4 Priority land | Identify Year 5 priority land |
| Land Pre-Feasibility Assessment | Assess Year 1 land parcels | Assess Year 2 land parcels | Assess Year 3 land parcels | Assess Year 4 priority land | Assess Year 5 priority land |
| Land Allocation / Acquisition | Year 1 land allocated to DHS | Year 2 land allocated to DHS | Year 3 land allocated to DHS | Year 4 land allocated to DHS | Year 5 land allocated to DHS |
| Land Preparation, Project Packaging and Development | Initiate Year 1 project packaging and preparation | Continue Year 1 project preparation and packaging | Year 1 project approval and contracting | | |
| | | Initiate Year 2 project packaging and preparation | Continue Year 2 Project preparation and packaging | Complete Year 2 project approval and contracting | |
| | | | Initiate Year 3 Project packaging and preparation | Start Year 3 project preparation | Year 3 project approval and contracting |
| | | | | Initiate Year 4 Project preparation | Continue Year 4 project approval and contracting |
| | | | | | Initiate Year 5 project preparation |
| Start Building | | | | Year 1 project breaks ground | Year 2 project breaks ground |

Planning Beyond the Present

The COJ LAS positions the City of Johannesburg to move from reactive land acquisition toward structured, long-term spatial management.

It enables the City to:

- ✓ Plan land requirements relative to projected housing demand
- ✓ Align land assembly with infrastructure investment cycles
- ✓ Support MTEF-aligned implementation planning
- ✓ Inform strategic engagement with provincial and national partners
- ✓ Build a long-term land pipeline grounded in evidence

Because the Strategy is structured around analytical tools and spatial data systems, it can be updated as new demographic data, policy directives or infrastructure plans emerge.

The COJ LAS is therefore both a strategic framework and a dynamic planning instrument.



Further Information and Enquiries

For further information regarding the City of Johannesburg's Land Assembly Strategy please contact:

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