



## Yeoville Studio participates in the Yeoville Trading Task Team

04 August 2011

### Context

In December 2010, the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) Department of Economic Development (DED) called a meeting of street traders and market traders (around 400 in total) in the Yeoville Recreation Centre. The meeting was primarily to deal with rising tensions between street traders and market traders, and, following Maurice Smithers' suggestion to establish a trading task team to sort out issues, established a committee.



5 reps from street traders, 5 reps from market traders, Maurice as community leader, and a MTC representative (the market manager) were nominated to carry the discussion forward. Yeoville Studio offered its support as our findings on trading could help design and explore a variety of solutions.

### Meetings



Yeoville Studio first participated in a tour (18 March 2011) where different stakeholders (market traders, community representative, street traders) were to show and discuss their proposed solution for trading in Yeoville. As it became clear that street traders were intimidated and not resourced to present 'their' preferred options and solutions – in front of well organized and resourced community and market traders representatives, Yeoville Studio suggested that it could facilitate a workshop where street traders would express their views.

This was agreed, but the City insisted it wanted an immediate solution, as an agreement should be reached by the 15<sup>th</sup> of April (just prior to the elections). This workshop (21 March 2011), seconded by Edmund Elias, spokesperson for SANTRA and local activist in Yeoville, who was called upon by the street traders, led to the drafting of a one page position document.

The following task team meeting occurred in the absence of the City of Johannesburg (22 March 2011): street traders presented their position paper to the rest of the task team; Yeoville Studio presented its research findings and some recommendations for discussion. These results and recommendations were also published in the local community newspaper *Yeovue news*, for further debate. Some traders having expressed discomfort with some of the findings and recommendations, Yeoville Studio proposed a workshop in the market to debate the findings; and two (short-term and long-term) design workshops to look at visions for the market together with market traders.



## Politicization and the limits of Yeoville Studio's intervention

The following Trading Task Team meeting (16 March) was to be the last of the sort, because of a number of issues. The first one was the radicalized opposition between market traders and street traders (the former wanting to relocate the latter into peripheral markets; the latter wanting to remain, in a regulated way, on Rockey Raleigh street). Yeoville Studio was a victim of this conflict, being accused of taking the side of the street traders. The second major issue was brought by the YSF chairperson, who argued that the process was fundamentally flawed, since 1) the city could not be judge and party (chairsing a process it had a stake in); 2) the task team was not inclusive enough and therefore would not lead to realistic solutions – having omitted the shop keepers; property owners; users and community at large. The task team meetings were suspended until further notice.

While the relationship between Yeoville Studio and the market traders has become difficult (and the Studio's offer for workshops has been left unanswered), and in the absence of current trading task team meetings, Yeoville Studio continues to work on trading issues with the City of Johannesburg; with our community partners; and with street traders.