

FRUITFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH CITY'S BUSINESS SECTOR ON 2024/25 DRAFT BUDGET AND IDP

THE business sector convened at the uMhlanga Coastlands Hotel on 15 April to receive a comprehensive overview of the 2024/25 draft budget/ Integrated Development Plan (IDP). During the session, the economic and investment strategies outlined within the Medium-Term Revenue Expenditure Framework were highlighted. This pivotal gathering was initiated with the objective of promoting collaboration and transparency in governance, a sentiment warmly embraced by all participants. EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda led the fruitful engagement with business leaders, unpacking the details of the 2024/25 draft budget/IDP further solidifying the commitment to constructive dialogue and partnership between the City and its business community.

Emphasising the City's dedication to enhancing service delivery and cultivating an environment conducive to investment and job creation, officials underscored the significance of strategic partnerships with the business community. With a proposed budget totalling R67.3 billion, the Municipality outlined its allocation of resources, earmarking substantial funds for the revitalisation of essential infrastructure, particularly in electricity, water, and sanitation.

Highlighting the progress achieved in water and sanitation services, officials lauded the implementation of a turnaround strategy, which has yielded tangible results such as the reduction of non-revenue



EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda and other senior City leadership met with the business community, as a vital stakeholder of the City, to unpack the 2024/25 draft budget and Integrated Development Plan.

water and proactive measures to address water supply challenges. Notably, initiatives supported by international institutions like the World Bank and Development Bank of Southern Africa are poised to further enhance water management practices.

Moreover, the Municipality unveiled its commitment to private sector involvement in water service delivery, exemplified by public-private partnership initiatives aimed at ensuring water security and efficiency. These collaborations,

including projects like the Durban Water Recycling initiative, signify a proactive approach to infrastructure development and sustainability.

In the realm of public transportation, updates on the Go!Durban project underscored efforts to modernise transit systems and expand accessibility. Through strategic partnerships and investment in electric buses, the City aims to not only improve transportation services but also reduce carbon emissions, contributing to environmental sustainability.

Mayor Kaunda acknowledged the challenges posed by recent natural disasters, reassuring stakeholders of progress in repairing damaged infrastructure, with over 80 percent of storm disaster projects already completed.

In closing, both Mayor Kaunda and eThekweni City Manager Musa Mbhele expressed gratitude to all participants for their engagement and urged continued collaboration to realise the vision of eThekweni as Africa's most caring and liveable City.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT SATISFIED WITH PROGRESS TO RESTORE DAMAGED WATER AND SANITATION

DEPUTY President Paul Mashatile and eThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda conducted an inspection of the City's water and sanitation infrastructure on 12 April. The site visit started at the Northern Wastewater Treatment Works, where the contractor is fast tracking repairs. This work will mitigate sewer overflows to the Umngeni River and central beaches.

This was followed by an inspection of one of the two newly constructed reservoirs in Adams in the south of Durban. The visit by the Deputy President forms part of the work of the Presidential eThekweni Intervention Task Team which was established to resolve water challenges in the City.

Deputy President Mashatile was satisfied with the progress the Municipality has made in the restoration of infrastructure following the storm damage

in 2022 and the recent heavy rains this year.

"The President tasked us to check the challenges besetting the country when it comes to water supply. We visited Durban because we wanted to see for ourselves about what has been reported in terms of work done. We wanted to check if the Municipality has a plan and if it was being implemented. I am satisfied that there has been progress made which I will be reporting back to the President," he said.

Mayor Kaunda said the City was fast tracking projects to ensure the stability of water supply. He mentioned the new Northern Aqueduct augmentation which is at an advanced stage. This pipeline interconnects to the existing aqueduct and is set to improve the delivery of potable water to the northern areas.

In addition, a contractor has



Deputy President Paul Mashatile and eThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda took stock of progress made to repair damaged water and sanitation infrastructure in the City.

commenced with construction of the Southern Aqueduct Pipeline to uMlazi and surrounding communities in the south of Durban.

Deputy President Mashatile

also joined Mayor Kaunda at the Mpumalanga Stadium in Hammarsdale as part of the City's consultation of the proposed draft budget and Integrated Development Plan.

WATER AND SANITATION TURNAROUND STRATEGY BEGINNING TO YIELD DESIRED OUTCOMES

THE City's Water and Sanitation Turnaround Strategy has started to yield positive results as the Municipality is making progress to address issues identified in the strategy.

This is evident by the steady decline in non-revenue water. This can be attributed mainly to the increase in meter readings as well as an increase in resources for maintenance, with plumbing teams deployed promptly to repair leaks and burst pipes.

EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda said of the R67.3 billion budget for the 2024/2025 financial year, a substantial amount of this budget will go towards refurbishing and upgrading electricity, water and sanitation infrastructure.

"This is crucial if the Municipality is to succeed in providing uninterrupted supply of these critical services," he said. In line with the turnaround strategy, the City is finalising non-re-

venue water reduction initiatives that include a performance based project for the Phoenix, Inanda, Ntuzuma, and KwaMashu (PINK) areas, assisted by the World Bank and Development Bank of Southern Africa. This is now at an advanced project preparation stage.

"Meanwhile, other non-revenue water programmes are at various stages of procurement to cover all water supply systems. These include water loss professional services contracts and leak detection contracts," said Mayor Kaunda.

The City adopted the Water and Sanitation Turnaround Strategy in April 2023 which sought to improve the performance of the unit and reposition it to be able to meet current and future water and sanitation demands for the City.

The implementation of the strategy is based on a set of strategic objectives that were developed

by the City and supported by National Treasury's City Support Programme.

Addressing challenges of intermittent water supply is the City's main priority within the turnaround strategy.

Currently, the Municipality is implementing framework contracts for replacement of various system components that range from standby pumps, standby generators, replacement of valves and telemetry systems.

Great progress is also being made to resolve sanitation blockages by increasing resources to the teams to prevent ongoing spillages. Currently the focus is on preventive maintenance that has seen the City purchasing 16 new sewer jetting machines and an additional 28 will be delivered by August this year.

This has resulted in the reduction of general sewer repairs from 5 679 in December 2023 to 2 555 in March this year.

It has been reported that the delay in resolving some of the spillages is due to ongoing refurbishments at some of the storm damaged sewage treatment plants and restoration of major bulk sewer systems.

Mayor Kaunda said to ensure water security in the City, the turnaround strategy requires that major medium to long-term water resources projects must be implemented. "In this regard, the City has since approved and signed the agreement for the Umkomazi Dam Project, paving the way for its implementation with an estimated budget of R28 billion. The Lower Umkomazi Water Project is under implementation and envisaged to be completed by 2027," he said.

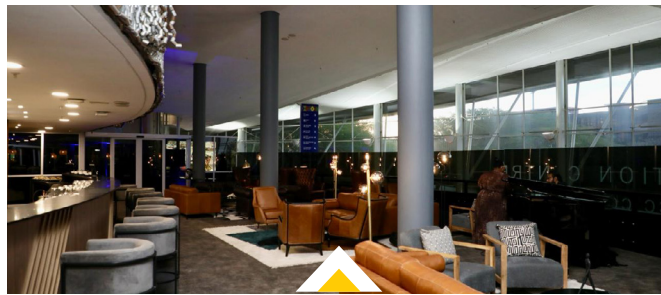
To date, the Municipality has started several public private-partnerships initiatives linked to water security which are now at various stages of approval through National Treasury.



DURBAN ICC UNVEILS NEW BUSINESS LOUNGE

THE Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC) has proudly announced the grand opening of its newest venture, the Durban ICC Business Lounge. This upscale space, designed to cater to the needs of business executives and leisure travellers alike, is the latest offering from the iconic centre who is always striving to meet the needs of its clientele.

The launch was attended by esteemed guests, including the full board of directors of the Durban ICC, along with eThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda and eThekweni City Manager Musa Mbhele which underscored the significance of this milestone for the City. Commenting at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Mayor Kaunda noted: "We wish to congratulate the Durban ICC, a Municipal entity, for the sterling work they are doing in the City. You continue to raise our flag high, and these new facilities will enhance the work you are doing." The Durban ICC Business Lounge sets a new standard for sophistication and comfort, offering an exclusive environment for relaxation, private meetings, and networking. With its high-end amenities and personalised service, the lounge provides a sanctuary for discerning guests seeking a premium experience in the bustling Central Business District of Durban. Lindiwe Rakharebe, Durban



The Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre, a Municipal entity, has announced the opening of a new venue. The Durban ICC Business Lounge.

ICC Chief Executive Officer said they are thrilled to introduce the Durban ICC Business Lounge, which represents their commitment to enhancing the hospitality offerings in Durban. "This new venture reflects our dedication to providing exceptional experiences for our guests while contributing to the economic growth and revitalisation of the City."

Durban ICC Board Chairman Dr Mduduzi Bophela said: "We look forward to welcoming guests from near and far to experience the unparalleled hospitality of the Durban ICC Business Lounge."

The Durban ICC Business Lounge is open Monday to Saturday from 12pm to 9pm, welcoming guests to indulge in a world-class experience.

Durban Business Confidence Index survey results

THE recent findings of the Durban Business Confidence Index for the first quarter of 2024 (Q1 of 2024) reflect a promising trajectory of improvement in service delivery within the Municipality. Despite encountering notable challenges, the City has demonstrated commendable progress in addressing concerns highlighted by the business community. In Q4 of 2023, dissatisfaction regarding service delivery was widespread among surveyed business stakeholders, with an overwhelming 94.1% expressing scepticism regarding the responsiveness of authorities to complaints regarding poor service. However, Q1 of 2024 witnessed a modest enhancement, with 90.7% of respondents still expressing concerns but indicating a slight increase in confidence that relevant authorities would address issues within a reasonable time frame.

While electricity supply remained a primary concern for businesses in both quarters, there has been discernible improvement, evidenced by the proportion of respondents citing electricity as the poorest service provided decreasing from 41.2% in Q4 of 2023 to 34.9% in Q1 of 2024. This positive trend suggests that efforts to mitigate electricity challenges are yielding results. The sentiment associated with electricity correlates strongly with load shedding, which decreased between Q4 of 2023 and Q1 of 2024. The Municipality welcomes the survey report as an invaluable instrument in identifying challenges and priorities crucial for cultivating and sustaining a favourable environment for both existing enterprises and potential investors.

SMARTXCHANGE

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and contribute to advancing the KwaZulu-Natal Ocean Based Economy. Apply now and unleash the boundless creativity within you, akin to the ebb and flow of the ocean's currents. Deadline for submissions is 25 April 2024.

- Application form: <https://forms.gle/2EecrC2Q-1BLwibjDA>
- Website: <https://www.smartxchange.co.za/ocean-economy/>

THE City is calling on innovators to participate in an ocean-based GenBlue

Programme. This is an opportunity to harness the power of your ideas



COEDMORE BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION GOING AHEAD AS PLANNED

THE rehabilitation of Coedmore Road and the construction of the Coedmore Bridge in Yellowwood Park are progressing well and remain on schedule.

The original one-lane structure bridge was destroyed during the recent floods.

It is being rebuilt using funds from the Municipal Disaster Response Grant allocated by National Treasury.

EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda visited the construction site on 13 April to inspect the rebuilding of Coedmore Bridge.

"We are constructing a new 90-metre-long, two-lane bridge with pedestrian walkways using cutting-edge integral bridge technology to reduce maintenance costs.

The project, with a budget of



EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda (centre) conducted an oversight visit to Coedmore Road in Yellowwood Park to assess progress of the construction of a new R48 million bridge. The existing one-lane structure was washed away during the 2022 floods. The new 90 metre-long structure will be 12 metres wide.

R48 million, also includes the construction of a 150-metre road leading to the bridge, implementation of traffic calming measures, and

installation of improved surface drainage systems," said Mayor Kaunda.

The project is expected to be completed by November

this year and will benefit residents in Wards 64 and 65. Additionally, 12 locals have been employed as part of the project.

BUDDING DESIGNERS TRAINED UNDER DFF PROGRAMME

The annual mentorship programme of the Durban Fashion Fair (DFF) is underway for the class of 2024. The class comprises of 30 emerging designers who are currently receiving training to work towards making their brands known in the industry. The 10-month programme, which is under the banner of eThekweni Municipality's Fashion Development Programme, commenced last month.

EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda said: "Each year, eThekweni Municipality invests in the mentorship programme to prepare those entering the fashion industry to succeed in the highly competitive sector."

He said the programme over the past 12 years has provided access to market opportunities for over 324 designers who



Budding designers participating in the City's 2024 Durban Fashion Fair Mentorship Programme are eager to learn as much as possible to position their brands in order to break into the fashion industry.

have in return created 100 sustainable jobs. Some are now supplying major retail chain stores such as Edgars and have opened their own boutiques. The programme is facilitated by Fezile Mdletshe, Managing Director and founder of Fezile Fashion Skills Academy. She is conducting the training on

behalf of the Municipality. She said this year's programme will cover creative direction, business studies and costing as well as one-on-one coaching, technical drawing, and garment construction.

Mdletshe said currently the mentees are in the creative process of the programme.

They are being educated on how to compile and differentiate between a mood board and a storyboard, how to technically draw and sketch, and the importance of understanding fabrics prior to sketching and sourcing them. They will also be taught how to register their companies under the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission.

One of the beneficiaries, Nontuthuzelo Ndongeni said: "I feel honoured to be part of this programme and very grateful for the opportunity. After attending a few classes, I have learned so much in a short space of time. I now better understand how I want to position my business."

The mentees are expected to showcase their collections during the annual DFF showcase which takes place in September.

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