ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ETHEKWINI WEEKLY BULLETIN

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By 2030 eThekwini will be Africa's most caring and liveable City

22 September 2026 [Issue 479]

MAYOR XABA UNVEILS MULTI-MILLION-RAND GO! DURBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba was joined by councillors and key stakeholders during the official opening of the R312 million Eleventh Avenue Interchange in Clermont on 17 September. This interchange is part of the GO!Durban transport service.

IN PREPARATION for the launch of the first route of the Go!Durban services in December, eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba officially opened the R312 million Eleventh Avenue Interchange in Clermont on 17 September. This marked a major milestone for the GO! Durban Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network as it gears up to commence operations in December.

The newly completed infrastructure, situated along the Dumisani Makhaye Highway, anchors the high-priority C3 Corridor linking Bridge City and Pinetown, designed to alleviate traffic bottlenecks and streamline regional commutes.

The interchange, which was completed in June this year, serves as a link among the Berkshire Downs, Clermont, and KwaDabeka communities. The new road infrastructure will help to ease traffic congestion, improve traffic flow, enhance road safety, and strengthen connectivity for communities travelling through this corridor.

Mayor Xaba said the investment forms part of the R9.7 billion the City has committed for infrastructure for GO!Durban.

"It represents not only an investment in transport infrastructure, but also an investment in the future of the City and its people," he said.

Following the official opening of the interchange, Mayor Xaba handed over houses in Ward 22 and proceeded to conduct an oversight inspection at the Kloof Extensions 15 and 21 Housing Project in Ward 19 before addressing residents at a community engagement session at the Sugar Ray Xulu Stadium.

Mayor Xaba outlined plans to increase investment in the western region of the City to create job opportunities.

"We continue to attract investments into the City because we understand that when the economy grows, families are able to put food on the table," he said.

ESTABLISHMENT OF INNER-CITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

ETHEKWINI Municipality is taking steps to accelerate the renewal and regeneration of the Central Business District Inner City, an area recognised as a key economic, social, and environmental hub that has faced significant challenges and decline over the years.

The City's Executive Committee (EXCO) has recommended the approval of a feasibility study for the establishment of the eThekwini Inner-City Development Company (DevCo), a Municipal-owned company that will focus specifically on regenerating, developing, and improving the management of the inner city.

The proposal follows a process initiated by Council in 2023 to identify the most appropriate way of strengthening Municipal services and driving urban regeneration in the inner city. National Treasury's Government Technical Advisory Centre was subsequently appointed to assess the challenges facing the inner city.

The assessment recommended the establishment of a dedicated development company to drive regeneration initiatives.

Chairperson of the Governance and Human Resources Committee, Councillor Nkosenhle Madlala, said the initiative is about restoring confidence in the inner city.

DevCo will focus on co-ordinating development projects, attracting investment, managing strategic Municipal properties and supporting efforts to create a cleaner, safer, more vibrant and economically active inner city.

The establishment of DevCo is expected to begin with a phased process, with initial operations planned for July 2027 and full operations and expansion from July 2028.

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INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS REAP BENEFITS

EThekwini Municipality's commitment to strengthening international and African partnerships has yielded significant benefits. Through strategic diplomatic engagements, the Municipality continues to foster economic growth, enhance knowledge sharing, and build strong trade relations.

Highlighting these gains is the City's Five-Year Service Delivery Milestones campaign, Asmile Siyaqhuba: Resilience Through Adversity. It casts the spotlight on service delivery gains made during the 2021 to 2026 term of office.

The Municipality has continuously cultivated global connections to attract foreign direct investment and drive economic development in the province. Knowledge sharing is a key component of the Municipality's programmes.

The City has collaborated with the Netherlands and Japan to acquire valuable knowledge on flood mitigation strategies, which is an essential area of focus given the region's vulnerability to extreme weather events. The Municipality has also established multilateral relations with numerous international and African countries, leveraging these partnerships to enhance socio-economic development in both eThekwini and KwaZulu-Natal.

The City's co-operation with international diplomats extends across various sectors including tourism, agriculture, food processing, clothing and textile, manufacturing, automotive, renewable energy, maritime, and the digital economy.

The International and Intergovernmental Relations Directorate is working hard to position eThekwini as a preferred investment hub. Attracting foreign direct investment is a key priority, and to facilitate this, the City has established the eThekwini Economic Council (EEC). The EEC brings together diverse stakeholders to unlock eThekwini's economic potential and create job opportunities.

DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS POLICY

In August 2024, the International and Intergovernmental Relations Policy was formally approved by Council. This policy creates a legal and institutional basis for how the Municipality engages with other spheres of government and international partners, covering co-ordination mechanisms, priorities, and governance arrangements.

This was a foundational milestone for standardising how the directorate operates, aligning co-operation with national and provincial prioritiess.

FORMAL STRENGTHENING OF CITY-TO-CITY PARTNERSHIPS

EThekwini entered into a Friendly Exchange City Relationship Agreement with Ningde Municipal People's Government (China) aimed at co-operation in trade, green energy, tourism, education, and environmental sustainability.

This agreement reinforces Durban's position as an active global partner.

MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT MISSION

In June 2025, eThekwini City Manager led a high-level international engagement mission to the United Arab Emirates, focusing on urban innovation, sustainable transport systems, smart mobility and digital governance platforms, and knowledge exchange with Abu Dhabi and Dubai departments and tech partners.

This was significant as it reflects a strategic shift toward global urban innovation partnerships with government, business, and technology actors, broadening eThekwini's international reach.

STRATEGIC ACADEMIC AND KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIPS

In September 2025, a three-year memorandum of agreement was signed between eThekwini, the Durban University of Technology and co-partners including the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of South Africa, and Stellenbosch University to drive research collaboration, capacity building, and innovation platforms pertinent to Municipal policy and service delivery challenges.

EXPANSION OF SISTER CITY PROGRAMMES

The Municipality continues to maintain and expand global sister city relationships (across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas) that support information exchange, governance co-operation, and cultural diplomacy. These are long-standing bilateral agreements but remain active.

ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT DBF AWARDS

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba celebrated with winners of the Durban Business Fair Excellence Awards held on 19 September at the Durban Exhibition Centre.

ETHEKWINI Municipality honoured entrepreneurs, businesses, and creatives contributing to economic growth and job creation at the Durban Business Fair (DBF) Excellence Awards held on 19 September at the Durban Exhibition Centre.

The awards brought together three flagship programmes, the Durban Business Fair Excellence Awards, Lions' Den Business Plan Competition, and the Durban Fashion Fair Recognition Awards. Winners received recognition and enterprise development support, including funding towards equipment and other business needs, with prizes ranging from R10 000 to R60 000 across various categories.

For the Lions' Den competition, Sparkle n' Glow won the Emerging Business category, with Creative Tech as runner up. Super Clean Tekkie Wash won the Established Business category, with Thandimpumelelo Hardware as runner up. Msuthukazi Group received the Entrepreneurship Excellence Award, while Waterloo Blocks was the runner up.

The DBF Excellence Awards recognised Plastimed Packaging as the DBF Excellence Award winner, MM Clothing as the Rural and Township Based Business Award winner, and Amazizi Leatherworks as the Women-Owned Business Award winner. The Youth-Owned Business Award was a tie, with Magaga Media and Communications and Grace Academy High School named joint winners.

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba said the awards reflected the Municipality's commitment to broadening economic participation and creating opportunities for businesses to grow.

TOURISM SURGE SIGNALS RENEWED MOMENTUM FOR DURBAN

JULY has emerged as a month of renewed optimism for eThekwini's tourism sector, with a significant increase in both international and domestic visitor spending, showing a positive momentum in the City's tourism economy.

The latest performance was highlighted during the Presidential eThekwini Working Group (PeWG) on Tourism Revitalisation Workstream 4 meeting. Figures provided by South African Tourism paint an encouraging picture of eThekwini's international tourism performance. In July, the City recorded approximately 28 000 international arrivals, contributing an estimated R83.1 million to eThekwini's visitor economy. International arrivals increased by 22.4 percent compared to June, marking a notable recovery.

South African Tourism General Manager: Data and Analytics, Melusi Mngomezulu, said the continued improvement could result in significant tourism growth by the end of the year.

"At the current rate, the City could close the year at just under R1 billion in international tourism revenue contribution."

Durban experienced a tourism boost in July.

International markets also continued to demonstrate their importance to Durban's tourism performance. The United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, United States, and France were among the contributing markets.

NEW DAILY DURBAN-ADDIS ABABA AIR ROUTE WELCOMED

THE announcement by Ethiopian Airlines' of a new daily non-stop air service between Durban's King Shaka International Airport and Addis Ababa has been welcomed by the City. The new daily route is set to commence on 11 December and marks a significant milestone in strengthening Durban's position as a leading gateway city and enhancing the region's global connectivity.

Through Addis Ababa, passengers will have convenient connections to more than 135 destinations across Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America. This expanded network is expected to boost tourism, facilitate trade, and attract greater investment into the City and the broader KwaZulu-Natal.

KZN MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs Rev. Musa Zondi said: "This milestone strengthens KwaZulu-Natal's global connectivity and creates new opportunities for tourism, airfreight, and trade and investment, reinforcing the province's role as a key gateway into Africa."

EThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba and Municipal leadership have consistently highlighted the importance of improved air connectivity in driving economic growth and creating opportunities for local communities.

COMMITTEE APPROVES MULTI-BILLION-RAND INVESTMENT SUITE

THE City's Economic Development and Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Thembo Ntuli, has approved a massive suite of strategic interventions aimed at driving local growth, attracting private sector investment, and expanding the Municipal rates base. Subject to final approval by the Executive Committee and Full Council, these resolutions leverage the Economic Development Incentive Policy to unlock over R1.966 billion in private capital through targeted property rates rebates.

Key infrastructure and industrial initiatives include:

- Housing and Rural Frameworks: Inserting precinct plan numbers under Special Zone 20 in Cornubia to facilitate 2 601 mixed housing units. Additionally, the City Manager will sign a Traditional Rural Spatial Framework memorandum of understanding with 18 traditional councils to align Municipal planning with traditional leadership and alleviate rural poverty.
- Industrial and Automotive Growth: A 100 percent rates rebate supports a R600 million investment by the Alpine Group for a steel billet production mill near the Durban Port. An 80 percent rebate will back a R250 million automotive manufacturing facility by Ogihara South Africa in the Dube TradePort Special Economic Zone, creating 220 jobs.
- Commercial Expansion: Rates rebate of 50 percent will support a R780 million project by Growthpoint for 2 300 student beds at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, a R200 million township shopping facility by Newlistar in Inanda creating 562 monthly jobs, and a R136 million retail build by Sibaya Node 5.

The City's Economic Development and Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Thembo Ntuli (right), convened recently to deliberate on critical initiatives driving local growth.

Broader structural reforms approved by the committee include:

- Property Bulk Optimisition: Ridgeside Sub-Scheme Amendments will reallocate commercial space and residential units to free up frozen development rights.
- Micro-Enterprise Support: A partnership with Asime Women non-profit company will deploy a R2.5 million FoodBev SETA grant to transition 55 youth and women-led agribusinesses into commercial markets.
- Township Economy Legislation: The Retail Markets and Informal Trade Amendment By-law will enter a 30-day public participation phase to cut red tape and protect informal traders.

ETHEKWINI STRENGTHENS SAFETY AT HIGH-RISK INDUSTRIES

THE Fire Services Directorate recently put emergency response plans to the test at hazardous sites where a single incident could endanger workers, nearby communities, and critical infrastructure.

The simulated emergency scenarios tested evacuation procedures, communication systems, incident response protocols, and co-ordination between company personnel and emergency responders. The drills also assessed how quickly workers could react under pressure and highlighted areas requiring improvement before an emergency occurs.

Fire Safety Risk Assessor Sandile Dladla said emergency preparedness remains one of the most effective ways to save lives and reduce risk. "These exercises strengthen co-ordination, improve response times, and help identify weaknesses."

The City's commitment to saving lives was recently demonstrated through emergency preparedness drills for high-risk industries across eThekwini.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP PROMOTES DIGITAL TOOLS

DIGITAL innovation and inclusive planning emerged as key drivers of resilient communities during a disaster management workshop hosted by the Disaster Management Directorate.

The workshop brought together experts to strengthen response, preparedness, and emergency co-ordination.

Discussions focused on strengthening partnerships, improving communication, and ensuring action when communities face risk.

The engagement equipped stakeholders with practical tools to strengthen disaster risk reduction, sharpen early warning systems, and improve co-ordination during emergencies.

Acting Deputy Head of Disaster Management, Dr Yarish Brijmohan, said the workshop was critical to strengthening preparedness.

"The workshop reinforced the importance of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and innovation in disaster management," he said.

Technology emerged as a key enabler of effective disaster management.

Digital platforms, early warning systems, real-time information sharing, and data-driven planning are transforming disaster management through faster decision-making, rapid response, and stronger recovery efforts.

R1 MILLION INVESTMENT BOOSTS 60 WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

Sixty women entrepreneurs from eThekwini were overjoyed to receive productive equipment, aimed at strengthening their businesses and unlocking pathways to sustainable growth.

AN INVESTMENT of approximately R1 million in productive equipment is set to strengthen 60 women-owned businesses in eThekwini, helping entrepreneurs increase productivity, expand their operations, create livelihoods, and unlock opportunities for growth.

The handover took place on 14 September, during the Women in Business Symposium held at The Station under the theme, 'From Survival to Scale: Unlocking Growth for Women Owned Enterprises'.

Led by Minister of Small Business Development Stella Ndabeni, the symposium brought together women entrepreneurs, government, development institutions, business experts and other stakeholders to address barriers that continue to constrain the growth of women-owned enterprises, including access to finance, markets, business opportunities, networks and productive assets.

The handover forms part of the Informal Micro Enterprise Development Programme, an initiative of the Department of Small Business Development, aimed at supporting enterprises to move from survival towards sustainable growth.

Minister Ndabeni said providing women with productive assets was critical to improving their capacity to grow their businesses and contribute meaningfully to the economy.

In his welcome address, eThekwini Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba said government must create an environment where women-owned businesses can move beyond survival and participate meaningfully in economic growth.

The beneficiaries received equipment tailored to their respective businesses, including beauty and hair, catering, food production, clothing, construction, carpentry, upholstery, cleaning, sewing, furniture, agriculture, poultry, recycling, multimedia, printing, leather goods, laundry, repairs and renovations.

GERMAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION

THE South African Local Government Association, in partnership with Global Engagement Germany, hosted a delegation of German and South African city representatives at a capacity-building workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) Knowledge Transfer Workshop provided a platform for municipalities from both countries to exchange insights and reflect on the key processes, challenges, and success factors associated with local sustainability reporting.

Participants examined and compared their experiences across three critical dimensions of successful VLR implementation, namely, governance and organisational structures, data management and indicator frameworks, and communication and stakeholder participation.

As part of the programme, delegates visited several flagship sustainability initiatives, including the Rooftop Garden and the Early Morning Market Composting Project.

They also gained insights into the Municipality's inner city regeneration programme and toured the Point Waterfront and harbour precincts.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT ADVANCES PARTNERSHIPS FRAMEWORK

REPRESENTATIVES from government and the business community recently met to strengthen collaboration for the implementation of the Partnership Framework. Discussions focused on progress made on the Partnership Framework to date, governance arrangements, partnership typologies, and opportunities for increased business participation. The meeting formed part of the Presidential eThekwini Working Group Workstream 8: Focus Intervention Team 1. Participants were updated on key milestones achieved in developing the Partnerships Framework, with emphasis placed on creating a structured and transparent approach to collaboration between the public and private sectors. Business representatives welcomed the progress and provided their inputs. A significant portion of the engagement focused on the role of the Integrated Public Private Partnership Office, including business participation opportunities and the value of secondments in supporting implementation capacity. Stakeholders agreed that active involvement from the private sector would be critical in accelerating project delivery and achieving shared development objectives. The session concluded with a shared commitment to advancing partnerships that drive inclusive economic growth and sustainable development across eThekwini.

If you would like to submit feedback or contribute to eThekwini Weekly Bulletin

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