



Midvaal Local Municipality
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**STATE OF THE MUNICIPALITY ADDRESS (SOMA)
DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR: ALD PETER
TEIXEIRA ON THE 29TH OF JUNE 2023**

Speaker of Council, Cllr. Alan McLoughlin

Member of the Provincial Legislature Honourable, Tshepiso Msimanga

Member of the Provincial Legislature and DA Provincial Chairperson, Hon, Fred Nel

Metsimaholo Local Municipality Executive Mayor Jeff Zwane

Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor Lerato Maloka

Speaker of Sedibeng District Municipality, Alderman Moipone Modikeng

Speaker of Emfuleni Local Municipality, Cllr Sibongile Soxuza

Speaker of Lesedi Local Municipality, Cllr Phindi Mpemvu

Members of the Mayoral Committee,

Whip of Council, Cllr Phil Pretorius

Chairpersons of all Committees of Council

Councillors of Midvaal Local Municipality

The Head of the National Crime Prevention Steering Committee,
Policing, Safety and Security, Ambassador Nhlanhla Sizani

His Majesty, Ndabezitha Mabhekaphezulu Khumalo, Royal
Princess Amantungwa and royal clansman

All South African Police Service, Midvaal-based Station
Commanders

DA Vaal Regional Executive Committee

Municipal Manager Anton Groenewald

Heads of Departments

Senior Management

Ward Committee Members

Representatives from the South African Local Government
Association (SALGA)

Representatives from the Department Water and Sanitation,
Basic Education, Labour and Gauteng Department of Forestry

Business leaders of Midvaal

Mrs Anrika Bryant / Rotary International/ Meyerton and Henley
on Klip president.

Representatives from PMR and Ratings Afrika

Acting Vice Chancellor of Vaal University of Technology, Dr Dan
Mokoena and delegation

School Principals, Members of the School Governing Bodies and learners

Members of the public

Members of the media present

Esteemed guests and Midvaal Officials

And most importantly, our residents,

Dumelang,

Goeie More

Sanibonani

It is an honour and a privilege to share this incredible time in the history of this municipality, with you.

In my State of the Municipality Address last year, I assured the people of Midvaal that even if the world around them changes, my commitment to serving them will not.

And to date, I still stand firm on those words.

I am proud to be part of a team that shares a common vision to improve the lives of the people of Midvaal.

Even before assuming our roles in office, we made a solemn commitment to our residents, business owners, visitors, civil society, NGOs, and all stakeholders alike.

Our team is committed to:

1. Investing in Safety and Security for all people of Midvaal
2. Creating opportunities for all
3. Providing excellent service delivery
4. Solving challenges through innovation and creativity
5. Listening to the people we serve. This is non-negotiable.

These Mayoral undertakings have found expression in the IDP document, budget and strategic framework and performance of every department.

Mr Speaker, following in the footsteps of previous administrations, the Midvaal Local Municipality received its ninth consecutive clean audit.

This is an incredible achievement, especially in an era where mismanagement, corruption and patronage have become the norm and has been the cause of the crippling problems experienced by the majority of South African Municipalities.

The clean audit is a result of the collective efforts of our committed Councillors, Municipal Manager, HODs, Senior Managers, and staff members.

It is also due to our trustworthy residents who continue to maintain regular payments of their rates and taxes.

It is due to a combination of consistent political will, a team of highly dedicated staff members and a community that trusts in the integrity and ability of their duly elected representatives.

Mr Speaker, I made a commitment to the people of Midvaal.

My promise to them was to build a Midvaal we can all call home.

Allow me to say this, Clean Audits mean nothing, if our people cannot **TOUCH, FEEL, SEE, AND REAP** the benefits.

We can pat ourselves on the back and throw parades as politicians, but if *uMama Madonsela wase Sicelo and Nkgono Mosia wa Savanna City* don't feel the direct impact of this, then it means nothing.

Mr Speaker, I want to assure this esteemed Council that the following state of the municipality address which I am about to present, has been thoroughly thought out.

It encompasses both the current state of affairs and our vision for a more prosperous future.

Our intention is to demonstrate that we are a compassionate and responsive government.

Our aim is to show our residents that they have a leadership who effectively manages the challenges posed by the prevailing economic climate, while striving to ensure sustainable service delivery.

The plans we are unveiling today are underpinned by a transparent and practical budget recently put forth by our MMC of Finance, Ald. Patricia Hutcheson.

I will not present a rose-tinted state of the municipality address, instead, I will present a realistic overview of the reality that our people live in.

This address will lay down the strategic plans and steps that need to be taken to improve the lives of the people of Midvaal.

Mr Speaker, if I may share a wise motto recently spoken by my colleague Mayor André Truter, who governs over one of the best-performing municipalities in South Africa, Saldhana Bay Municipality.

In his wisdom, Mayor Truter said: ***“We’re not good enough, how can we get better?”***

This may come as a surprise because compared to the other municipalities in Gauteng, Midvaal truly is an island of excellence in a sea of mediocrity.

However, we must not fixate on the accolades and awards that the municipality receives.

We must actively put our efforts towards improving service delivery, the state of our infrastructure and creating an enabling environment for economic growth.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

2023/2024 FINANCIAL BUDGET

Mr Speaker, on 27 May 2023, following an extensive IDP and draft budget engagements, Council collectively approved one of Midvaal's biggest budgets to date.

The budget was assessed by the Provincial Treasury who gave us a stamp of approval finding our budget to be **credible, relevant, and fully funded**.

Every cent in the R1.8 billion budget that was approved will be used to better the lives of our residents.

The following are the highlights of our budget for the 2023/2024 financial year:

The Revenue Budgeted for the year is over R1.7 billion, which is an increase of 9.09% on the current year's budgeted revenue.

The Capital and operational grants account for R294 million which is an increase from the current year's grants income.

The Expenditure Budget for the year is R1.8 billion, this is an increase of 13% on the current year's budgeted expenditure.

Midvaal Local Municipality, employee-related costs constitute only a fraction of our overall budget.

Our total salaries account for just 24% of our total budget.

This is substantially lower than the 40% benchmarked threshold proposed by National Treasury.

This demonstrates our commitment to allocating the majority of our funds towards important areas such as service delivery and infrastructure maintenance.

Repairs and maintenance as a percentage of total expenditure is 12.26% up from 10% for the current year, this amounts to R 188 million.

Grant funding and its successful expenditure without deviation have always been positively received by the funding departments.

Midvaal prides itself on its record of expenditure performance of capital grants which was 95% for 2021/2022 financial year.

There is an expectation of achieving a similar outcome for the 2022/2023 financial year.

Mr Speaker, to address the inadequacy of grant funding, Midvaal has been exploring the option of obtaining loans to finance other capital expenditure items.

R200 million over three years and a drawing down of R50 million will be used for essential infrastructure projects, aligning with our Long-Term Financial Planning strategy.

The Medium-Term Revenue and Expenditure Framework over the next three years (MTREF) Operating budget is R 5,8 billion of which:

Eskom is R 1,7 billion

Staff is R 1,3 billion

Procurement is R 1 billion

Repairs and Maintenance R 592 million

Rand Water is R562 million.

Mr Speaker, through effective management, I am happy to report that we have cash reserves to cover 5 months.

We were able to achieve Municipal Financial Sustainability levels and it is for this reason that we were ranked the number one municipality in South Africa by the independent rating agency Ratings Afrika.

This is an accolade we share with Saldanha Bay Municipality.

This capacity is a direct result of our steadfast commitment to sound financial management principles, which we have consistently embraced and upheld throughout the years.

Mr Speaker, as noted in MMC Hutcheson's budget Speech, the Provincial Treasury did raise concerns that Midvaal's tariffs are not cost-reflective and that we are not able to recoup all costs on our trading services such as refuse removal, water and sanitation.

However, Midvaal being a compassionate institution that is constantly working to shield its residents against the harsh economic climate we have kept our rates and taxes significantly low.

The average property is increased to 6.75%, water is 9.2%, refuse 7%

and wastewater 6.75%.

Mr Speaker, our country faces significant risks due to the continuous interruptions in power supply, rising inflation and an increase in global interest rates.

All these challenges have negatively affected our residents, and therefore the municipality's revenue collection rate.

Last year, Midvaal could easily turn out a collection rate of 97% a month, and a year-to-year rate of 95% but this would be at a significant cost to households.

The fluctuating collection rate that we have been seeing will require constant monitoring to ensure that the assets of Council are well-maintained to avoid service delivery interruptions.

INDIGENT POLICY

Mr Speaker, Midvaal's budget and new indigent policies are pro-poor and supportive of the most vulnerable members of our community whilst prioritising the development of our areas.

I am pleased to report that any household earning less than approximately R6 000 qualifies to be registered as an indigent.

Poor households with an aggregate income below (around R8,000) will receive a 50% rebate on property rates if their property value is below R1.5 million.

Households with a property value above R1.5 million and an aggregate income below (around R10,000) will receive a 25% rebate on property rates.

Approved poor household applications will result in the write-off of outstanding balances.

In addition to the lower rates we offer to all households, I want to share that over the next 3 years, we will write off approximately R210 million in debt that is irrecoverable.

These are mainly households in distress which we try to assist where possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, Midvaal currently has at least 4559 indigent households.

The provision of subsidised services amounts to R276 million.

This includes relief water of 6 kilolitres per person per month, wastewater, refuse collection plus 50-kilowatt free electricity.

This brings our support to R 486 million.

In addition, we spent R74 million in grants from INEP, MIG, and WSIG not including our own funds in some of the poorest areas of the Council.

Over the next 3 years, a further R240 million is expected to be spent from grant funds for the improvement of service delivery in our historically disadvantaged areas.

This brings us to a total of more than R 800 million from a budget of R 5.4 billion, almost 15% of our total budget is pro-poor.

This includes access to services for Water –which means that access is above 95%.

Wastewater – only 69% of all households, as we still make use of chemical toilets, septic tanks and others.

Refuse collection – above 95% including 4559, and 8 informal settlements.

Electricity access – 93% - 20% Eskom supply, 68% MLM, 5% illegal connections.

Blue drop 95% - consistent water quality testing will yield test results every 48 to 72 hours to ensure proper monitoring.

It is a source of pride that our testing regime at water points maintains a consistent high-quality standard.

A number of municipalities are failing to meet this standard.

PUBLIC SAFETY, ROADS, TRAFFIC AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ladies and gentlemen, sustainability is the foundation for development.

Every major decision we have taken as a government started by asking what is in the best interest of our municipality and its residents.

We have demonstrated this by the allocation of R913 million to the Public Safety and Roads department over the MTREF.

This is the second largest budget allocation equalling 15% of the budget allocation.

This department will also receive R63 million in funding for the acquisition of a new fleet to enhance service delivery.

In this year of operation, we commenced with the centralisation of fleet management to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr Speaker, the municipality's population has grown rapidly and so has the demand for better service delivery.

To meet these demands, we have committed R 11 million for a new Fuel Depot.

This will enable us to direct expenditure towards upgrading our fleet and effectively manage our fuel consumption.

This will provide a tank capacity of 50 000 litres of diesel and 25000 litres of petrol to drive a municipal fleet of 250 vehicles.

Investment into Safety

Mr Speaker, one of the key focuses of our administration is to prioritize the safety and security of the residents of Midvaal.

To achieve this, we have taken several measures, including the establishment of Community Policing Forum (CPF) groups throughout the municipality.

Midvaal has four SAPS stations and each one of them has dedicated CPFs, Neighbourhood Watches, and Farm Guards.

The Farm Guard groups play a crucial role in safeguarding our rural areas against stock theft.

To aid them in their efforts, we have equipped all CPFs and Neighbourhood Watches with essential tools such as two-way radios, torches, and reflective jackets to ensure visibility during patrols.

We have spent one- hundred thousand rands this year on the equipment mentioned above.

Moreover, we have implemented advanced technology in our rural areas by deploying thermal heat drones to combat stock theft effectively.

In the past financial, the municipality invested a substantial amount of R5 million to enhance safety initiatives.

Looking ahead, our commitment to the safety of our residents remains unwavering.

In the 2023/2024 financial year, we have allocated a significant sum of R7.7 million towards ensuring the safety of our community.

Our plans include expanding the installation of safety cameras to cover the Western part of our municipality.

Furthermore, we are in the process of establishing our first-ever law enforcement unit and we are procuring two high-performance vehicles.

The vehicles will be used to patrol our areas around the clock and bolster our security measures.

CCTV

Through the CCTV monitoring, sixty-seven (67) stolen vehicles were recovered and seventy-nine (79) suspects were arrested.

The SAPS members visited the control room 83 times to collect CCTV footage as evidence.

Additional cameras were installed at Sicelo Sports Grounds, the Power station, Savannah City, Lakeside and Aloeridge Walkerville.

The CCTV monitoring received 7842 positive alerts on the numberplate recognition system during this period with an average of 700 per month.

Traffic

Mr Speaker, in line with Midvaal's vision of being innovative, the traffic department is constantly researching ways to improve traffic services and ensure accountability, integrity and ethical conduct.

The Traffic Division has implemented faster turnaround times for procurement processes to ensure improved service delivery.

We have procured Dashcams and Bodycams for our traffic vehicles and traffic officers ensuring that all out-of-vehicle movement and interaction with the public are captured.

This is to ensure there is no opportunity for corruption.

We have also procured two brand new vehicles branded and fitted with the latest technology for faster response rates.

Fire

Mr Speaker, Midvaal Fire Department received a Provincial-Grant to purchase a R7,5 million Medium Pumper Fire Engine.

This will add meaningfully to our response capability.

With the additional grant funds that rolled over, the department purchased a Breathing Apparatus Compressor system.

Through the Municipal Capital funding we also purchased the following which will assist in protecting residents during emergencies:

- Radios and repeaters to enhance our communication network.
- A 4x4 Bakkie Ford Ranger and Cherry Picker to service the CCTV cameras.
- A Rescue vehicle for Vaal Marina Fire Station for servicing the community in Ward 1.

Our operational personnel are continuously provided with fire-combatting assistance during the winter fire season to ensure they are fit and able to attend to emergencies.

The Fire service has a service-level agreement in place with all our neighbouring Municipalities to assist when needed.

Our Fire Department also hosted a Fit for Fire competition where Municipalities from JHB, Gauteng and as far as Middelburg came to measure their strength against Midvaal.

And you obviously know who won that battle.

Public Safety and Roads

Mr Speaker, while we pride ourselves as a commendable municipality consistently tackling service delivery challenges, we must acknowledge that we are not exempt from facing our own set of difficulties and challenges.

One notable challenge we face is addressing the backlog concerning gravel to tar roads, graded roads, and the maintenance of our current road infrastructure.

The adverse weather conditions have significantly impeded our teams' progress in accomplishing the scheduled road maintenance tasks.

We think of our colleagues in the Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal who have suffered extraordinary weather and who have seen millions of rands in damage caused by these incredible storms.

We are fortunate this far to be spared from similar challenges.

And despite its relatively small population, Midvaal, as a semi-rural municipality, boasts a considerable geographical area.

In fact, its territory surpasses that of Johannesburg, highlighting the significant geographic size of the municipality.

We have allocated R88 million for roads over the MTREF period.

However, an earlier assessment showed that Midvaal needs at least R600 million to address the road maintenance requirements.

This is impossible to finance in any given year, or even over a MTREF period.

Nevertheless, we will leverage our limited budget to expand our reach to as many areas as possible.

Challenges aside, our administration continues to make inroads in terms of improving our gravel to tar roads.

In the past financial year alone, the municipality spent R25 million on upgrading our road network.

The budget went into upgrading the following roads: Papawer, Brak, Baal Muller, Bougainville, Gustaf Preller, JG Strydom, Caledon Street and Bronk.

All these roads except for Bronk Road, are at 89% completion rate.

I invite the residents of these communities to hoot and greet our roads team who will be finalising painting and road markings in the next coming months.

Mr Speaker, we have a budget of over R35 million for road projects in the next year which will towards the following:

- Rehabilitation of Johan Le Roux Road which is a key economic route in our municipality.
- Gravel to tar road projects in various areas.
- Building of speed humps in various areas.
- As well as stormwater implementations.

Mr Speaker, the Roads Team are on the ground daily, fixing potholes, and renewing road markings with a special focus on the outer laying areas.

In the last year alone, Midvaal was able to:

- Repair a total area of over 18 086 square meters that was affected by potholes contributed to 80% of our complaints.
- Successfully graded and scraped 371 kilometres of road surfaces.
- Restored and repainted the road marking centre line along a stretch of over 72,48 kilometres.
- Repainted a total of 1346 intersections, ensuring enhanced visibility and safety and replacing 197 road signs.
- Successfully executed weed control measures and conducted thorough street sweeping along a vast stretch of 18.3 kilometres of roads.

We are committed to increasing the Roads Department fleet collection by R21.5 million in the next financial year.

This will consist of procuring Tractors for grass cutting, a Skip truck, a compactor for waste and a 12-ton roller for the construction of roads.

An additional R41.2 million has been allocated in the MTREF to ensure that old vehicles are replaced to ensure continuous service delivery to our residents.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the Corporate Services Department will receive R444 million budget allocation over the next 3 years.

The municipality is now firmly positioned as a force for innovation and creativity.

We are embracing technology as a tool that fast-tracks service delivery and reduces burdensome administrative actions.

In order to achieve maximum efficiency, an investment of R19 million will be made into ICT systems over the MTREF to improve our management of staff, resources, reporting and monitoring.

Mr Speaker, after engaging in extensive deliberations and listening to the numerous concerns raised by the community, it became evident that the pressing matter of "jobs for sale" required our immediate attention.

In response to this, the Corporate Services Department implemented an automated recruitment portal with the ability to provide improved efficiency and greater oversight across the recruitment process.

We are proud to advise that the amended process has resulted in a more streamlined application and advertising pipeline for jobs.

Boosting Staff Morale, retention and Performance

My esteemed colleagues, Midvaal Municipality is a high-performing institution because of our highly dedicated staff members.

It is important, however, to ensure that management continues to boost staff morale and improve institutional culture to bolster performance.

Upon taking office in 2021, this administration rolled up its sleeves and immediately started engaging with all internal stakeholders including labour unions.

We ensured thorough consultation and compliance to legislation when introducing new policies and policy amendments.

These include an amended Recruitment Policy which now opens all posts to internal and external competition.

No preference is given for internal candidates.

A new open Labour Register Policy for EPWP and General Workers has been implemented.

This again eliminates favouritism and or nepotism and prevents preferential treatment of any candidates.

We increased the staff bursary to R 25 000 per official.

We have seen a significant increase in the use of the scheme, and this is a clear indication that staff are motivated to enhance their skills offering.

Other development opportunities range from basic artisanship studies like plumbing and electricians as well as master's degrees in fields of expertise that are needed.

In addition, the Professional membership fees policy was approved wherein Midvaal will pay for staff fees related to their professional association.

We are currently examining fresh policies aimed at providing support to our lower-level staff members regarding the expenses associated with their children's higher education.

Additionally, we are also considering financial assistance for community members who require support for the costs of higher and tertiary education.

We are addressing issues of ill-discipline and implementing consequence management strategies to ensure compliance and improve efficiency among municipal officials.

On innovation and the use of ICT more creatively.

Mr Speaker, Midvaal is a beacon of service delivery, however, we must continually strive to raise the bar of excellence.

To this end, Midvaal has adopted a strategy to utilise information technology as a critical catalyst to improve overall resident satisfaction.

Using technology will enable the Municipality to improve response times and reduce overall waiting times at Municipal offices.

We promised to enable residents to log complaints via What's App.

However, we will be expanding our digital capability to allow residents to log calls using more inclusive social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am excited by the latest developments at our Customer Care unit.

Our operational model for service teams will now be channelled through data insights where service delivery pressures are predominant.

For the first time in the history of our management, the Executive will be provided with an operational dashboard that contains accurate information for effective and transparent decision-making.

Mr Speaker, the above will enable the Municipality to enhance complaint logging, which saw the Call Centre receive 30 000 community complaints within the 2022/2023 financial year.

The Municipality closed roughly 80% of the complaints logged.

We aim to do more and respond more effectively.

The tools we are investing in will assist us to monitor more effectively.

On average, the Municipality receives approximately 2500 monthly complaints.

The most common complaints relate to:

power outages,

water leaks,

no water,

blockages and

potholes.

The Department plans to raise the bar and enhance the quality of complaint closure through user feedback embedded in the complaints process. Simultaneously, citizens can track the status of the logged complaints through the My Midvaal App.

These are huge improvements in our responsiveness to our community.

DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Mr Speaker, Midvaal's Local Economy is estimated at R 12,5 billion from all economic activity based on a survey conducted last year.

Midvaal is R 1.8 billion as a contributor to this economic GDP.

The local economy is driven largely by the tertiary sector (60.8%), followed by the secondary sector (36.3%) with the primary sector being the smallest (2.9%).

Of the economically active population 4.3% is employed in the Primary Sector, while 24.7% is employed in the Secondary Sector and finally 58.6% is employed in the Tertiary Sector.

As part of our ongoing strategy to identify areas within our Economic Growth strategy, we identified three (3) to five (5) game-changers in one or two sectors to promote economic growth and opportunity.

Midvaal needs the future economy to focus on future -roofing our tax base to ensure our continued financial sustainability.

These projects are in Alternative energy, Investment into industrial Automation and Waste management.

Mr Speaker, the local economy started to regain the losses experienced as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The recovery was further impacted by high fuel prices as a result of the geopolitical Russia-Ukraine complex.

Most sectors of Midvaal have recovered beyond the pre-covid figures. Agriculture as a sector showed great resilience as one of the best-performing sectors.

Employment-creating sectors such as construction and mining are still to recover.

This is worsened by load shedding.

Youth unemployment nationally is at an all-time high nationally, and Midvaal is equally affected in this regard.

Pre Covid figures indicate that 30,6% of people between 25 and 34 of years of aged were unemployed.

This escalated to 52,3% in 2022.

In our presence today we have some of our interns.

We are committed to creating opportunities for our youth and where we can we will make space for young people to get learnerships or mentorships or opportunities for experience.

Skills Development Centre

Mr Speaker, it is not the role of government to create jobs.

Working opportunities are created by the industry players, entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises, present in this venue today.

Individuals who take risks, and visionaries who create solutions out of challenges, those are the people at the helm of progress.

I firmly believe that Midvaal Municipality's primary responsibility is to invest in infrastructure and technology which makes it easier for businesses to thrive in our area.

We understand that we cannot build this community alone, we must hold hands and work together with private businesses and civil society to make a tangible difference.

And to this end, Midvaal in partnership with Heineken is in the process of establishing a Skills Development Centre in Savanna City, focussing predominantly on the youth.

The centre will give SMMEs access to training, development and facilities to start and develop businesses, up-skilling or reskill the youth and job seekers.

R1,2 million for containers (has already been funded by Heineken) and R400 000 in municipal funding will be invested in the project.

Work is currently underway for approval of the building as well as partnering with a reputable training body, to manage and facilitate training.

I wish to encourage all players in this space to reach out and partner with us.

Midvaal has also in collaboration with funders such as South 32, made land available for the Atlehang Ladies Sowing Club.

This initiative comprises female members of the Sicelo community that are making garments, including corporate clothing for a number of clients.

The Expanded Public Works Programme creates employment opportunities in four sectors, being Infrastructure, Non-state, Environmental and Social Sectors.

The Municipality has been rewarded for its performance with an increase in the current budget allocation of R 2,5 million to R3,8 million.

This has created a total of 2278 short-term job opportunities.

This intervention is critical in ensuring that there is some financial relief for those able to work.

The Day-mothers programme created permanent employment opportunities for 81 previously unemployed women.

In addition, more than 500 children benefit by having proper child and aftercare services.

Stimulating economic growth.

Economic growth and opportunity are driven by infrastructure delivery.

In this regard, roads play a critical role in unlocking development.

The upgrading of the R82 is a major catalyst for spatial transformation, which contributed to the need to develop Bronk Lane as the second access road to Eye-of-Africa.

This will help to unlock phases 10, 11 and 12 and will result in reaching 4000 high-income residential units with an investment value greater than R 4 billion.

Investment Committee and Investment Facilitation

Mr Speaker, the Municipality has established a Midvaal Investment and Business Retention committee to drive investment initiatives.

The intention is to have a cross-functional multi-department structure to expedite the decision-making of critical investment requests.

Midvaal Local Economic Development Forum

Midvaal has established a Midvaal Local Economic Development Forum by bringing together stakeholders under one umbrella for better coordination of economic projects.

Support to SMMEs

In June 2023, we held a successful Open Day for Small, Medium Enterprises (SMMEs).

These SMMEs were linked with the Gauteng Economic Development Department to obtain financial support and opportunities for our SMMEs.

The municipality holds regular training sessions to assist SMMEs with registering their businesses, and SARS processes, and equipping them with knowledge of Municipal supply chain processes.

Building and land use control

The Building and Land Use Control section approved a total 618 building plans during the 2022/2023 financial year, with an estimated value of over R 900 million.

Of the 618 approved plans a total of 423 passed final inspection.

This demonstrates that almost 70% of the plans submitted are almost completed.

This means that developers are building and not holding land for speculation.

With a growth of almost R1 billion in construction, Midvaal must do more to attract more developers, builders, businesses, and investors.

The compliance to municipal bylaws is important to ensure a good quality of life for all residents.

To combat transgressions the municipal departments, conduct joint operations to visit properties suspected of contravening the bylaws.

During the 2022/2023 a total of 61 such operations were conducted.

Housing - Savanna City

Mr Speaker, Midvaal is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Gauteng due to its rapid urban and economic growth.

In response to this, the municipality has entered into a Private Public Partnership for the Savanna City mixed-use housing development that caters for low to medium, and medium-income earners.

This is a Public-Private Partnership and is set to develop 18,399 housing opportunities.

To date, 4600 houses have been constructed.

The allocated beneficiaries are from Midvaal, Emfuleni and the City of Johannesburg due to a cross-border agreement with the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements

One of the biggest challenges that Midvaal is facing is a lack of variety of housing typologies.

Market demand seems consistently high for rental units.

The construction of the first 100 units of the 336 walk-up units has already commenced along Pierneef Boulevard.

The development resulted in an investment of approximately R210 million.

Sicelo Reblocking

Mr Speaker, the Sicelo Informal Settlement comprising of extensions 4 & 5 is situated on Erven 41, 52, 53 & 184 Meyerton Farms.

The informal settlement is one of the most congested within the Municipality and constitutes a majority of the housing backlog estimated at about 4000 households.

The provision of access to basic services in the Sicelo informal settlement demonstrate that communities have basic access.

However, Midvaal Local Municipality would like to improve the living conditions of the households by undertaking a re-block process to de-densify the area.

Land has been acquired by the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements (GDHS) in Langkuil for a mixed housing development comprising of 8500 units.

The Township establishment application has been submitted to the Municipality for consideration, the application is in circulation for internal and external comments.

In the meantime, the municipality has relocated 250 households from the Sicelo informal settlement to the alternative site in Langkuil.

Through this project, the lives of the Sicelo community have been improved in the following manner:

- Relocated households now have individual water connections or taps on the allocated stands.
- 7.6 km of new 75mm water pipelines have been installed with 50 standpipe connections and 30 fire hydrants.
- The creation of access roads now allows passage for emergency and community services vehicles.
- Sanitation in the form of Chemical toilets has been provided to households by the GDHS as part of the Informal Settlement Programme.

Mamello

Mr Speaker, we are continuing to intervene in the Mamello Housing Development to ensure a speedy resolution to the housing challenges there.

We have opened discussions between the contractor, the surrounding property owner and the Gauteng Department of Housing to find a workable solution for the project to resume.

Once the project is completed it will yield more than 550 housing opportunities for the community.

Flood Victims

Mr Speaker, 2022 experienced heavy rains which resulted in flooding for many of our areas.

As a response to this, thirty (30) households affected by the floods and residing under a dangerous Eskom powerline were moved to a more suitable property at ERF 188.

This is a permanent solution where the municipality will also make an investment for the development of infrastructure and secure tenure by creating a total of 148 new residential sites.

Land Invasions

Speaker, despite the challenges faced by many municipalities regarding illegal land invasions, Midvaal has maintained its proactive approach with an impressive average turnaround and response time of 48 hours.

Through this program, Midvaal has effectively prevented land invasions in high-risk areas like Doornkuil, De Deur, and Wildebeestfontein.

The municipality has a 100% success rate in curbing illegal land invasions.

We want to allocate serviced stands to our people, which must include the basic services like water, electricity and sanitation.

We want our people to live in a conducive and dignified environment.

Upgrading of informal settlements programme

I am proud to confirm that the municipality agreed to enter into a Social Compact agreement with the Department of Human Settlements and the community of the eight existing informal settlements to upgrade these settlements.

The Upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme (UISP) seeks to upgrade the living conditions of people living in informal settlements.

By entering into the Social Compact Agreement, the municipality commits itself to a three-year programme.

The settlements included in the programme are Sicelo Extensions 4 & 5, Kromdraai, Khayelitsha, Piels Farm, Mamello, Skansdam and Boitemelo.

COMMUNITY SERVICES ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Community Services will receive a budgetary allocation of R593 million over the MTREF.

This is just over 10% of the budget allocation.

In addition, a capital allocation of R109 million will be provided over the MTREF to assist with the provision of much-needed community, social, recreation and waste infrastructure.

Libraries

Speaker, Midvaal takes pride in its remarkable collection of seven library facilities.

These state-of-the-art establishments are fully equipped and stocked with a comprehensive range of resources and materials.

All our libraries have access to Free Wi-Fi to bridge the digital divide and improve access to information for our community members.

The following are highlights from the 2022/2023 financial year:

- A number of ICT upgrades were conducted at Meyerton, Bantu Bonke, and Sicelo including e-learning, computer accessibility and wifi access among others.
- We undertook various facilities upgrades including carports at Randvaal Library, renovation of Henley on Klip, Lakeside and the acquisition of a mobile library unit.
- We deployed a mobile library truck to reach the communities in the outskirts of the Municipality.
- Our libraries frequently conduct computer classes for community members which include basic computer .training.

With a total Library membership of over 7000 subscribers, our libraries are finally seen as resource centres and not mere book collection places.

Parks, Cemeteries, Sports, And Recreation

Speaker, the regular maintenance, repairs and development of our Municipal Parks is a cause very close to my heart.

The municipality wants to further develop at least 5 parks in Midvaal by installing playpark, outdoor gym equipment, fencing and pathways.

It is my hope to do more.

Our team will revisit this space again at the adjustment budget later this year.

We can do MORE and must do more for our children.

We need to create a safe recreational space to help improve the quality of life for the residents of Midvaal.

The space should accommodate all age groups for optimal usage.

In partnership with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, we have installed outdoor gym equipment and kiddies' play areas at Riversdale Park.

This vision is extended to Savanna RDP section Pocket Four.

We recently appointed a service provider for the installation of playpark equipment, outdoor gym, fencing and pathways at Meyerton Park.

The maintenance of our Sporting Facilities and Ring ball Courts is on a continuous basis.

We have made a budget allocation to complete the construction of Lakeside Multipurpose Centre which is earmarked for completion in 2023.

Sicelo Multipurpose Centre has a budget allocation for resurfacing and levelling of the existing sports field.

There is planned maintenance and upgrade of the Meyerton Sports Clubs, the facility will be furnished with grandstands, ablution facilities and turf management.

Ladies and gentlemen, all the above-mentioned efforts, will ultimately yield positive results.

I am pleased to announce that three athletes have already been identified from the Midvaal area to compete internationally.

For the first time, our very own homegrown talent will represent Gauteng Province at the Tricolore event in Italy.

They will be participating in Rugby, Chess and Football.

Mr Speaker, a budget has been made available for procuring 10 tractors in the 2023/2024 financial year to help with replacing our ageing fleet.

The municipality has also appointed a service provider for the maintenance of machines for a three-year period.

This will reduce the incidents of Community Services being stuck without vehicles and ensure quick turnaround times for fixing our fleet.

Cemeteries

Mr Speaker, we believe that cemeteries are sacred spaces which should be well maintained to give dignity to our loved ones who have passed.

We have embarked on the extension of Kookrus Cemetery, and erected palisade fencing.

We have appointed a consultant to do designs for an ablution block, plotting of graves and creation of pathways.

The Municipality is also in the process of finalising a cooperation agreement with Sedibeng District Municipality to create a regional cemetery to provide more burial spaces.

The facility is designed to operate for a 20-year period.

ECD And Day Mother Programme

Our esteemed guests will be pleased to know that early childhood development is a key priority for our municipality.

We firmly acknowledge that our children are the cornerstone of our future.

In the words of the esteemed late President Nelson Mandela,

"Our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future."

I am excited to share that the Hollard Foundation has recognized Midvaal as a prime example of outstanding ECD practices, selecting us as a case study for visitors from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

This accolade reflects our ongoing commitment to investing in and supporting our ECD centres.

We persistently strive to formalize and strengthen these centres of excellence to nurture and educate our young ones.

The Day Mother programme has also facilitated the establishment of 81-day mothers and created job opportunities.

These Day Mothers care for more than 800 infants and children across the municipality.

This has afforded many families the opportunity to go to work knowing their children are safely cared for by a person who is supported and qualified.

GEYODI Programmes

Mr Speaker, to support the Gender, Youth, and People Living with Disabilities portfolio, a total of 380 people have been reached through various programs initiated by the municipality, Civil Society and the private sector.

In addition to this, we recruited 80 elderly persons to form part of our active ageing programme across the 15 Wards of our municipality.

Ladies and gentlemen, the issue of GBV remains central to our fight for a more just and compassionate society.

I believe that men, in particular, have a duty to protect our partners, the elderly and vulnerable groups in our community.

Our municipality has embraced this critical role in this discourse by educating 100 people about behavioural and cultural change.

And as part of efforts toward Youth Development, more than 100 young people were targeted for capacity building and economic integration.

Primary Health Care

Although Primary Health Care is a Provincial responsibility, we are still obligated to render quality services to clinics located in our municipality.

Midvaal provides services such as water, sanitation, as well as electricity supply.

These five clinics are utilized by more than 27 000 patients per month and it is therefore critical to ensure that they have a continuous supply of services by the municipality.

Waste and Environmental Management

Mr Speaker, we conduct waste collection daily, covering all areas of the municipality.

We collect more than 750 tons of household waste a month.

We have nine (9) compactor trucks as well as backup contractual arrangements for emergencies during mechanical failures.

This is to ensure uninterrupted waste collection around the clock for every single day of the year.

We have litter pickers who clean and collect litter daily around the municipality, we have a team stationed in Meyerton CBD and a rotating team.

There is bulk waste service provision for industrial businesses and residents who request skip bins.

We have 4 skip trucks and have procured an additional 13 skip bins this financial year to service the Blackwood transfer station.

We collect 600 to 2000 tons monthly of illegal dumping materials.

We budgeted for the hiring of a fleet to help with regular cleaning around Sicelo.

We have three (3) Transfer stations that are fully operational.

We are currently upgrading Blackwood and we have also made renovations at Klipriver transfer station.

A 4th transfer station at Savannah City has been registered with the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment.

The municipality has 3 Landfill sites and in conjunction with Sedibeng District Municipality, we are working on a Project to establish a new Regional Landfill site in Doornkuil.

The Environmental Management section has been dealing with the enforcement of compliance of different industries within the municipality.

A budget has been allocated for educating our residents on waste and environmental issues to minimise illegal dumping and promote a greener municipality.

The municipality spends millions in Rands to address illegal dumping in our areas.

This is money that could have been redirected towards other service delivery projects.

I strongly urge our community to work with us in keeping our areas clean.

ENGINEERING SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the Engineering Services Department is the backbone of Service Delivery and the respiratory system for any Local Government Establishment.

This department ensures that all residents in Midvaal have basic access to water, sanitation, and electricity.

Water access is provided through boreholes and Rand Water connections in areas where our infrastructure does not reach.

The Municipality provides basic access to electricity to the larger community of approximately 64% and some 20% through Eskom within our area.

Mr Speaker, our calculations indicate that an estimated 10% of our household population is illegally connected to our infrastructure grid.

This is an issue the municipality is aggressively working to address through educational programmes, the building of new electricity infrastructure, as well as the expansion of electrification connections.

Mr Speaker, to aid our Engineering Services department in fulfilling this critical mandate, we have allocated over R 3, 3 billion or just under 60% of the total operating budget.

In addition, more than 90% of the R 715 million capital budget allocation will be for Engineering services.

This budget allocation is geared towards upgrading improving and expanding our overall basic services infrastructure.

These services are the lifeblood of our sustainability.

Its importance is underlined by the significantly large allocation.

WATER

Ladies and gentlemen, Midvaal can never accept a situation similar to the Hammanskraal Cholera outbreak incident.

We are taking every precaution to ensure that the likelihood of a similar outbreak is minimised.

I want to reassure our residents that we continue to invest in the maintenance and upgrades of our water infrastructure.

It is important to note that at least R719 million will be spent on bulk water purchases from Rand Water.

It makes financial sense to ensure that we reduce non-revenue water and water losses to a bare minimum.

Mr Speaker, the municipality receives water from the Vaal Marina Water Treatment Works.

Raw water is extracted from the Vaal Dam and Vaal River respectively and pumped into two water purification works.

The raw water is treated, purified and disinfected to comply with the SANS 0241 standard for water to be fit for human consumption.

We ensure strict adherence and compliance with the water purification standards.

We are taking further precautions by building Chlorine Booster Stations in Identified Major Water Reservoirs in the Municipality within this MTREF.

While we are satisfied that our water supply complies with the minimum quality standards, we are taking proactive action to improve this further.

Our efforts have already resulted in a 95% rating for Blue Drop compliance.

The municipality has allocated over R45 million over the MTREF to replace existing aged bulk water pipelines.

This allocation is equivalent to approximately 14km of pipeline replaced every Financial Year.

Of utmost importance is to note that the Municipality has approximately 880km of water pipelines.

As a result of the costs and the length of pipes, the Municipality is pursuing other technologies, such as pipeline lining to revitalise the life of some pipelines.

Mr Speaker, in addition to funding from WSIG, the Municipality received R10 million under Schedule 6B of WSIG which focuses on infrastructure in the Informal Settlements.

This has seen water reticulation in Silahliwe in Sicelo Extension 5.

This has ensured legal access to basic water services for the people of Silahliwe.

Another R4,5 million has been allocated in the MTREF for water meter replacement.

Implementing this strategy will yield enhanced revenue generation, decreased non-revenue water, and improved efficiency for prepaid customers.

R1 million has been allocated to replace supply valves across the municipality to further reduce water losses.

The Municipality will embark on the indigent water leak repair programme.

This programme is aimed at Indigent Households with High Water Consumption which may be due to leaks within their properties.

The largest beneficiaries of this program are Savannah City and Lakeside.

The municipality will also drive an awareness campaign to help reduce water losses.

In this year, Engineering Services installed two (2) Pressure Reducing Valves in dealing with excessive pressures.

Midvaal will also procure infrastructure to monitor reservoir levels and pump stations in a control room.

This will ensure uninterrupted service delivery, improve proactive maintenance, and reduce non-revenue water.

The Municipality has invested in a Water Management System called ZedNet which assists in proactively addressing general losses within the system.

A total of R 60 million will be spent on better management of the water services.

The Municipality has put a lot of effort into dealing with water losses. The Municipality achieved 38% of water losses in a previous Financial, which is beyond the norm of 30%.

I am delighted to announce that the Municipality is at 29% of water losses for this Financial Year and we hope just to make it below the norm.

This will be an impressive 8% reduction.

The municipality has obtained a 69% for GreenDrop compliance.

This is an increase from previous Green Drop Audits conducted by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Sanitation

Mr Speaker, load shedding has significantly disrupted the functionality of our sanitation infrastructure, particularly the Sewer Pump Stations, leading to frequent overflows.

The municipality has taken proactive measures to address this.

We have successfully installed a new standby generator at Marina Letata in Vaal Marina.

Furthermore, within the next two months, standby generators will also be installed at the Ewelme Pump Station and the Bantu Bonke Wastewater Treatment Plant.

These initiatives aim to minimize the negative consequences of load shedding and ensure the smooth operation of our sanitation systems.

I am excited to announce that Henley on Klip pump station is nearing completion.

This project cost R35 million and ran for four (4) years.

Many challenges have been experienced including climatic conditions and excessive rock during deep excavation.

We will be reinstating the existing infrastructure in due course.

The Municipality has allocated R9 million for sewer extensions and new connections including Daleside Sewer Extension.

This will ensure that properties are connected.

The residents of Papagae Street in Sicelo have benefitted from the funding and we are proud to have brought dignity to those residents.

The Municipality has allocated R7.5 million which goes towards the refurbishment of pump stations and upgrades in the entire Municipality.

We must make it clear that this budget is not sufficient to deal with all the consequences of load shedding.

Speaker, the Meyerton Wastewater Treatment Plant is still a thorny issue for our institution.

We wish to report back to our community that we have managed to engage the Department of Water and Sanitation, in fast-tracking the project implementation in upgrading the Wastewater Treatment Works from 10ML to 25ML.

We commit to keeping our community informed on further developments.

ELECTRICITY

Ladies and gentlemen, more than R 2,1 billion will be spent on bulk purchases from Eskom over the MTREF.

It is critical that non-revenue losses are minimised and that where possible theft or illegal connections are also minimised.

It is in our interest to protect our infrastructure as it remains the single most important resource to ensure our continued sustainability.

In an attempt to bring the losses down, we have embarked on the Electrification of the Sicelo informal settlement costing R18 million in the current Financial Year.

Further to this, R50 million has been budgeted of which R35 million is from INEP and R15 million from our own funding.

This initiative aims to provide legal electricity connections to the communities in Kuvukiland, Extension 5, and Stand 188 of Sicelo.

In addition, an allocation of R45 million from the INEP, along with R15 million in Loan Funding, will be utilized to electrify Savannah City and enhance its electricity capacity.

Another R45 million from the INEP and R15 million loan funding will be used to install a 3.8-kilometre 88KvA line from the Ironside Eskom substation to Savannah City.

This will increase our electricity capacity to accommodate the expansion of Savannah City.

A total of R 188 million will be invested in strengthening, securing, and improving our network as well as increasing our capacity to provide electricity to all our residents in almost all our communities.

All of these efforts and actions have contributed to a significant reduction in electricity losses of 11.64% as opposed to a target of 11.5%.

Mr Speaker, as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure fair and lawful electricity usage, the municipality has undertaken an extensive audit of large power users to identify instances of tampering.

This comprehensive audit has yielded remarkable results, with the municipality successfully recovering an impressive amount of R15 million from this initiative alone.

Through diligent monitoring and proactive measures, the municipality continues to safeguard the integrity of its power distribution systems and uphold financial accountability.

Speaker, our call centre has received numerous complaints about broken streetlights.

In fact, during a recent interview, I did with John Perlman on 702, a concerned resident from Henley on Klip called in to raise a concern that their streetlight was not working for the last two years.

I am delighted to report that we have doubled our efforts to repair the streetlights in Henley on Klip and that the Electrical Department is currently working overtime on streetlights to catch up with any backlog.

Mr Speaker, as the power crisis surges on, Midvaal is exploring innovative ways to become less reliant on Eskom.

We are engaging stakeholders on innovative developments to address the energy crisis.

Council has approved the Embedded Generation Policy to allow large energy customers to generate their own energy during commercial hours.

To date, we have administered over ten applications and are seeing a huge uptake from other players.

We are in the process of introducing a feed-in tariff for solar users to pump energy into our grid. We will set up a control room to allow a safe energy import into our grid at a fair price to our customers.

We are planning to engage with Eskom to compile a wheeling agreement for Independent Power Producers to pump energy in Midvaal.

This will allow us to have a balanced energy mix extending our options outside our own borders. These are innovative steps we are taking to mitigate and shield our residents from load shedding.

Midvaal is committed to finding sustainable solutions for our municipality to shield our residents from the harsh impact of load shedding.

Project Management Unit (PMU)

The following projects worth a value more than R 50 million will be spearheaded by our Project Management Unit:

- Upgrading of Roads from Gravel to Surface at Gawie Venter, Plein, & Railway Roads
- Construction of Gravity Bulk Water Line in Klipriver Valley
- Completion of the construction of Lakeside Sports Complex Multi-Purpose Hall.
- Construction of Trading Stalls in Meyerton CBD near the Taxi Rank.
- Construction of Station Road & Diens Lane including a sidewalk and a Traffic Circle in Meyer Street, also in Meyerton CBD.

We remain committed to ensuring that our infrastructure is managed, maintained and expanded to achieve our broader objective of inclusive economic and social opportunity for all who live in Midvaal.

MAYORAL PROGRAMMES

Mr Speaker, on 3 May 2023, we embarked on a youth listening campaign across the length and breadth of our municipality.

Buang Batjha, which translates to 'the youth speak', is a campaign initiative that aims to actively involve young people in discussions surrounding the pressing issues they face.

During the campaign, young people had the opportunity to present solutions to the socio-economic challenges they face, such as poverty, substance abuse, and unemployment.

My office is currently compiling all inputs and information that we have received which will be followed by a Youth Summit that will gather all young people from Midvaal and connect them with relevant stakeholders to assist in addressing some of the issues that were raised.

The municipality will ensure that these engagements extend beyond mere talk and produce a sustainable youth programme that will address the challenges and social ills faced across Midvaal.

MAYORAL DONATIONS

Mr Speaker, in the 2022/2023 Financial year, my office made over 29 Mayoral donations to different individuals, NGOs, NPOs, businesses and the youth.

The following are some of the donations my office made:

- McAusland Boxing Management, which manages our great Female Boxer, Smangele “Smash” Hadebe- who is taking women boxing in South Africa to another level.
- Rhino Youth Sports Development for the Rugby Development and Competition at Sedibeng.
- Henley Wine Arts Music Festival.

- Meyerton Athletics Club to support our athletes participating in the Comrades Marathon.
- Huis Meyerton Home and Bonkgono Kopanong Centre supporting the elderly in our community.
- Three donations were made to support youth entrepreneurs.
- Walkerville Agricultural Show which also promotes local businesses.
- Henley at Heart as part of the maintenance and beautification of Henley on Klip.
- 10 best-performing matric learners from Public Schools in Midvaal.

Ladies and Gentlemen allow me to introduce a young and talented artist from Midvaal, Mr Mondli Kunene. He is internationally renowned and locally brewed.

We are fully behind you in all your endeavours to place our municipality on the map.

SPREAD THE LOVE

Mr Speaker, in partnership with Lynca Meats and Harvest Fresh, my office has initiated a monthly campaign called Spread the Love.

The campaign has donated at least 300 food parcels to families in need from across Midvaal Local Municipality.

I would like to commend both Lynca Meats and Harvest Fresh for their willingness to help those who are less fortunate.

I call upon other stakeholders to come on board and work with us as we uplift the lives of our residents.

We as a government cannot do it alone, many of the socioeconomic challenges require a whole-of-society approach.

CONCLUSION

Speaker, a significant number of South Africans have lost faith in their government and elected public representatives.

However, Midvaal Local Municipality has always strived to stay ahead of the curve.

Our remarkable achievements, including consecutive clean audits and recognition as the most financially sustainable municipality, serve as solid confirmation of this fact.

Nevertheless, we must not become complacent, as the work to serve the people of Midvaal does not end.

Complacency will result in Midvaal not sustaining its reputation of being a beacon of excellence.

In the words of the American Civil Rights Leader, **Benjamin Mays**:

“The tragedy of life is often not in our failure, but rather in our complacency; not in our doing too much, but rather in our doing too little; not in our living above our ability, but rather in our living below our capacities.”

And so, I reiterate the words of Mayor Truter: **we’re not good enough, how can we get better?**

We have a responsibility to all those residing in Midvaal to build upon our reputation of good governance and outstanding service delivery.

It is our duty to instil a sense of hope and confidence among our people, demonstrating that effective governance and development are attainable.

We must remain steadfast in our vision to make Midvaal a place we can all proudly call home.

Mr Speaker, I wish to reflect on the wisdom of the renowned father of Evolution, **Charles Darwin**, when he said:

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change."

With unwavering determination, I stand here today to pledge our commitment as Team Midvaal, to navigate the challenges that lie ahead.

We are fully prepared and capable of delivering consistently and reliably.

We will embrace change, seize opportunities, and forge a path towards a brighter future for **Midvaal, the island of Excellence.**

I thank you.

(The End)