

# Msunduzi

WE ARE THE CAPITAL



# News



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Clean public spaces will lead to a healthy nation - Mhlongo

by Siyethaba Mhlongo

**I**N the first 17 days of arrival in Msunduzi following his appointment as Senior Manager for Waste, Mr Wilson Mhlongo, made sure that his team rolled up their sleeves for the benefit of the City's residents.

Mhlongo joined Msunduzi while the country was under lockdown due to the Covid-19 outbreak. He was previously with the KwaDukuza Municipality where he also headed the Waste Department.

He said there was no reason for the waste department to stop its work of cleaning the City just because the country was on lockdown.

Talking about the decision to hit the ground running, Mhlongo said: "We've been identified as one of the essential services department under the Labour Relations Act because cleanliness and hygiene are critical at this moment."

He said as local government, municipalities had a responsibility to collect waste, clean the City, clear illegal dumping sites and ensure that public bathrooms were also kept in a hygienic condition. On the public ablution facilities, Mhlongo said even though the country was on lockdown there were those that still needed to travel to the CBD for certain essential services so they must be able to use these facilities.

"The lockdown actually gives us an opportunity to implement strategic plans that will yield results that everyone attest to. It is also a chance to review the existing plans and see which we want to keep for a long term



Mr Wilson Mhlongo (Picture: Andile Mahlaba)

such as those related to the sweeping of streets as well as clearing of illegal dumping and strategies to ensure that we curb this not just in the CBD but also in the residential areas," said Mhlongo.

In addition to strategies to keep the City clean, Mhlongo said they also wanted to improve the overall waste management plans which included refuse collection and the

disposing of waste.

"We also plan on going after those who do not pay for the refuse collection services so that we can ensure that the entire area under Msunduzi is kept clean. For example, there are rich people who don't pay for refuse collection so we will go after them. For those who can't afford, we encourage them to register for indigent benefits so that we can

get the equitable share that will allow us to continue providing them with the free basic service," said Mhlongo.

He said one of the biggest challenge they were grappling with at the moment was educating the public about waste management because many did not understand how this was regulated and how communities could play their part in keeping their areas clean.

"The community needs to be aware of their responsibility to reduce waste and recycling what they can so that throwing anything away becomes the last option. This will reduce the volumes of refuse that we have to collect but they will also benefit by having a healthy environment. These are the strategies that are used worldwide to keep areas clean," said Mhlongo.

He used plastic shopping bags as an example saying shoppers used to get them for free but now they were sold because this was seen as a strategy to encourage the public to recycle them.

"We are still investigating the gaps in our waste management strategies to see what led to this department not performing well because we want to see what can be done to resolve those challenges so that we can efficiently manage all the waste in Msunduzi," said Mhlongo.

He said they believed that Msunduzi residents will welcome the changes they are planning to introduce with the aim to be able to ensure that the waste management unit efficiently carries out its duties so that communities can enjoy an environment that is healthy, safe and clean.

## Illegal dumping is a concern for residents

by Siyethaba Mhlongo

IT started with every street corner being turned into an illegal dumping site but now there are those who are even dumping waste right in the middle of the roads. In every 250-metre stretch in Imbali there are at least three illegal dumping sites.

When the Municipality launched its #NameAndShame campaign, which is aimed at combating illegal dumping, the General Manager for Community Services, Mr Mbongeni Mathe, said those who dump their trash in public spaces are depriving the children a place to play and they are also putting the health of other residents at risk.

Meanwhile on the main road in France there are four illegal dumping sites. The community complained about brazen motorists who dump their trash there even in broad daylight. The Municipality cleared these areas on a regular basis but the perpetrators continue to dump there.

France resident Mrs Zingiswa Chitha said: "Children go to play in these illegal dumping site. They even try on the dirty clothes that are dumped there. When we try and tell people not to throw their trash there they respond by insulting us and call our government RDP houses shacks. They say we must leave them alone."

"It's not us who live in France who are dumping our waste there. We do what we've always done which is digging pits and burning our trash."



Pollution in human settlements (Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

She said it is the people from the neighbouring townships who are responsible for the illegal dumping in France. She said there is nothing they can do as residents because they do not want to start a war especially since some of the culprits are very rude.

She recalled one of the occasions when a car came to drop of trash there just as the Municipal waste truck drove away after clearing the place. This, she said, is one of the examples of how some people have no consideration for the work done by the Municipality.

"The truth is we can't expect the Municipality to keep doing the same thing. Even ourselves as residents

try to do our bit because this is our township and we care for our health. We go there and try to tidy up the place and burn some of the trash. Even when we tell the perpetrators that we have children who play there, they show no remorse."

Mrs Chitha said all types of waste could be found at these illegal dumping sites, even used masks, disposable nappies and condoms. She said sometimes children come home wearing used masks that they found there and they make balloons out of discarded condoms which exposes them to illnesses.

Mrs Chitha sells airtime and chips next to one of the illegal dumping site.

"Dumping here upsets us because we are also trying to make a living. What people are doing is taking food from our children's mouth," she said.

She said when the area is cleared, as the Municipality recently did, she is able to make up to R300 a day because there is enough space for cars to park if they want to buy something.

"As it is now we should have resumed trading because even the children are back at school but we couldn't because of the piles of trash. People will not buy from a filthy place that's unhygienic especially now that there's also COVID-19. When the Municipality is done clearing the place we'll also start trading again," said Mrs Chitha.

She said one of the reasons they encourage communities to dig pits is because some have a tendency to dump corpses of their dogs which stink up the surrounding area as they decompose.

"That foul odour comes straight to us. It also affects the children because they have no other places to play but at least they can go there because there are no cars driving by. When we are not around we're always worried that they might be playing in the trash," she said.

Mrs Chitha said they do not come from wealthy families and sometimes children find food items thrown there and eat those not knowing that it has expired. She concluded by saying that they would also like the Municipality to erect a sign to discourage people from dumping illegally.

# Is the City of Choice under siege?

by Celani Sikhakhane

**E**VEN though it is not official but suspicions are mounting that the Msunduzi is under siege from those who are trying to sabotage the Capital City and incite residents to protest against the Municipality.

The latest incident is the blast that damaged one of its critical electricity substations worth R75million at Masons Mills. This came as the City was still battling an inferno that mysteriously had erupted at its New England Landfill Site which left Msunduzi's residents choking in toxic smoke for an entire week. The hovering thick smog led to the closure of local offices of government, businesses and even schools.

In an exclusive interview, Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla, revealed that there were suspicions that there were elements of sabotage. He said the recent incidents indicated that there was definitely foul play.

It would appear that history was repeating itself as the Msunduzi's former mayor, Cllr Themba Njilo, suffered similar attacks as a result he ended up not completing his term which was supposed to end in 2021.

Late last year one of the City's brand new substation - worth more than R65million - was stripped of all the critical elements just before it was commissioned. Msunduzi has not recovered from that blow due to funding constraints.

This was just one of the incidents where the City's efforts to deliver services to communities were crippled by alleged acts of sabotage.

Some of the Municipality transformers have been set alight, vandalised and even stolen.

There were also recent reports of municipal security teams being attacked when they were deployed to guard the City's electricity

infrastructure which has left Mayor Thebolla and council perplexed by what is going on as they are confronted with crisis after crisis.

Msunduzi's leadership has now requested intervention from both the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Community Safety, Mr Bheki Ntuli, and the Minister of Police, Mr Bheki Cele.

Mayor Thebolla said this had nothing to do with tenders or people wanting jobs but it appeared to be politically-motivated and they want whoever is behind it to be revealed because they do not think opposition parties are involved.

"The Eastwood substation was worth between R65 and R75 million when it was vandalised. You can clearly see that was well planned because they waited until it was completed and fully fitted.

"While we were still trying to make sense of what had happened the one on Pine Street was set alight."

He said the recent blaze at the landfill site erupted on the same day one of the newspapers ran the article that City was winning the battle as they had been no fires for about six months.

"The truth is the economy of the City and the country was also negatively impacted as a result of the closure of the N3 for three mornings due to the smoke."

Other areas that were impacted by the fire include the Telkom tower which affected a lot of areas dependent on it for their telecommunications.

"It also caught fire and the challenge was that only Telkom could fix it and get it up and running again," said Thebolla

He said in January they also had several substations that were vandalised but they thought that it had stopped until these attacks resurfaced recently. "Initially we had a situation of illegal immigrants who were in conflicts in different parts of Pietermaritzburg but theirs was a



**A fire broke out in a landfill in Pietermaritzburg**

Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo



**Msunduzi electricity substation damaged during the blast**

different matter altogether and that's why we believe what we seeing now is politically-motivated but the law enforcement officials will get those who are behind all of it.

"Those of us who were part of the struggle understand that once you vandalise or set alight Government infrastructure you are no longer fighting a political battle and that it's in fact an act of treason. So those who are doing this are attacking the Government," said Thebolla.

He added that the opposition parties have been supportive in the work the leadership is doing to turnaround Msunduzi.

"This City had become a joke and for a long time it was known as the Capital of Filth because of the state it was in. Now we are confused about what's going on because we were struggling with high electricity demand in winter which is why new substations were built in order to assist carry the load. But they were set alight which led to outages and that angered a lot of people so they protested."

Thebolla said they are deeply concerned about what is happening because they believe the perpetrators want the City's leadership to fail in what they were tasked to do.

#### Residents' comments

Residents said the recent fires created an added burden during this period when there are concerns over Covid-19.

Mr Thino Ngcengeza: "The smoke gets into the house and you can't even breathe. You can try to close every gap but it still comes in then it hovers so you have no choice but to breath it in. Those with chest infections were really affected.

"It's not the first time this

happened because even last year we were faced with the same situation. COVID-19 and this smoke will quickly send us to our maker."

Mr Mthokozisi Xulu said: "I live about 35km from town but I'm still affected by the smoke. At night, during the day, it's all the same it makes it difficult to breathe."

Sakhile Sibusiso said: "It's really bad, especially for me because I live in town. I couldn't even hand my laundry outside because it would become dirty. The CBD itself is so dirty, you can't tell if this Municipality is working or people are on strike. Pietermaritzburg is so filthy!"

#### During Njilo's tenure as Mayor

Apparently during Njilo's tenure there was once a period where refuse around the CBD was not collected and streets were not swept for days. There was also reportedly an incident where some dumped piles of waste outside the Royal Show Grounds ahead of the event to celebrate the opening of the KZN Provincial Legislature, which was to be hosted there.

Njilo said these were some of the challenges that made him even consider resigning but he stood his ground and stayed on. However, he did not last as Council was subsequently reshuffled with his executive committee demoted for apparently failing to fulfil their leadership responsibilities.

It is alleged that at the time Njilo was also facing a series of acts of sabotage which led to Pietermaritzburg being labelled a 'City of Filth' as waste collection and street sweeping seemed to come to a halt. There were also incidents of refuse being scattered in different parts of town. He was also reportedly under pressure from some politicians who had no qualms about budging into his mayoral office demanding tenders of their choice.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Community protest erupts over power outages

by Siyethaba Mhlongo

ON the evening of July 23 a fire broke out at the Masons Mill primary station which left several areas without power. This station supplies a large number of areas including Afrox, Somta Tools, Eden Gardens Hospital, Ridge Park, parts of Camps drift, Umgeni Water pump station, Scottsville and parts of Richmond Crest

Msunduzi's Electricity Manager Mr Thabani Madlala said: "That was a big fire so we couldn't risk the lives of Municipal employees by sending them in there until it was completely extinguished."

Two months ago this newspaper reported on the criminals that were caught stealing electricity cables. While Madlala said the cause of the July 23rd fire was unknown he added that "there are several things that could have caused that fire and the theft of cables is the biggest culprit in such incidents. Initially when they tried to steal cables the station would switch itself off but you can't always rely on technology because it can fail."

Madlala said the damage caused by the blaze was estimated to be worth more than R6million. The outages caused by the fire led to a community protest last week. The

community of Ward 24 - which includes Ridge Park, Southlands and Scottsville - barricaded the R56 on Monday protesting in demand of the restoration of their power.

Madlala said: "Because of Covid-19 we first prioritised reconnecting Afrox because they provide oxygen to hospitals. We risk losing a lot of lives in the City if they can't work."

He said they were going to use innovative ways to connect the affected communities while repairs were underway at the primary station. "Most of the work has been done but we can't run away from the fact that our network is overloaded so we decided that it's better to implement a rotational load reduction schedule so that no one is completely off.

"When we connected other areas it also had a negative on others which resulted in unplanned outages due to overloading. The Murdock White Sub supplies the Wastegate, Grange, Buffer and Mpumelelo keeps tripping as we connect more areas," said Madlala.

He said the electricity team was not rushing to connect more areas at once because they wanted it done correctly to avoid mistakes that could lead to a damage on the infrastructure that cost a lot of money to procure.

"It also helped to work together with a team from Eskom because we



**Explosion damaged the Masons Mill primary station**

(Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

could get more done quicker."

On the day of the protest Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla and Deputy Mayor Manilal Inderjit visited the Masons Mill primary station to get a progress report on the work done and when they could restore power in all the affected areas. When the Mayor arrived to address the community that was protesting the electricity team was already on standby to reconnect those

affected by the outage but they could not get where they needed to because the roads were barricaded. The Mayor pleaded with the angry protestors to let the electricians through.

The community was already aware that there had been a fire at the primary station as some went there under the pretence of being Eskom's employees and they took pictures which they then circulated to their

neighbours.

Their main questions to the Municipality was when they would have their power restored and they also wanted to know if they would be compensated for their frozen food items that went off as a result of the electricity outage.

Mayor Thebolla said: "We request those who suffered damages to go to our offices at the Professor Nyembezi Centre on the ninth floor to lodge their claims so that the Municipality take the matter to its insurance company. We really humbly apologise for the inconvenience caused."

The Mayor also appraised the community on the rotational load shedding that would be implemented until the repairs were completed at Masons Mill. He told them that the network was overloaded, especially in the evenings between 4pm and 7pm because there was a large number of people using electricity at that time.

On Wednesday Msunduzi News visited Ridge Park, which was one of the areas that were affected by the outage. One of the residents, Miss Noxolo Ntshangase said: "We accept what the Mayor told us. What we could not tolerate and what led to people being so angry was being completely off and the lack of communication. Now we can see what the Municipality is doing and it's made a lot of difference."

# The Capital City gets free Wi-Fi

by Sabelo Maphumulo

**W**HILE the economy of the country is not doing well and the unemployment figures are on the increase as even those who used to be employed have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19, people still need to connect with their loved ones especially during this period when the country is on lockdown.

These days technological devices needed to communicate require internet access. There has already been several demonstrations around the country and on social media platforms because of the high data costs which gave birth to popular hashtag #datamustfall.

The residents have been fortunate to be amongst those to be provided with free internet when the JL Dube Broadband high site was recently switched on in Vezokuhle Primary School in Mpumuzu. The tower is on a hill which makes the Wi-Fi accessible in other parts of Msunduzi.

Minister of Communications and Digital Technology Mrs Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams was amongst the dignitaries who attended the launch of the broadband site.

During her address Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams said this is part of a long term vision to turn KZN into a "Smart Province" through the digital infrastructure.

She said the outbreak of COVID-19 showed everyone that there can no longer be any delays in the implementation of the plans to

ensure that everyone has access to digital technology.

"We have to change the way we do things because these days people don't even want to go to malls because of COVID-19 so they now do their shopping online so as Government it is our responsibility to ensure that we make provisions for such tools."

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams said the lack of internet access also deprived people of economic opportunities.

"We know that this is going to assist the entire community so it's not just going to be a white elephant after this launch. KwaZulu-Natal will show everyone that just because it seems impossible it doesn't mean that it can't be done when you have leaders who are motivated and passionate about digital technology."

She said they were initially planning to donate 23 laptops to Vezokuhle but due to the increase in enrollment as the school has more than 300 learners, they decided to add 50 more. "We are also going to take 500 young people, and not just those with those with tertiary qualifications, to show them how they can use technology to generate income," she said.

MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mrs Nomusa Dube-Ncube, said the mobile network is still a challenge in this province as a result only 9% have access to the internet.

"The slow broadband is the reason we have challenges with the network. We would like this project to be fast-tracked because tertiary students are



MEC Dube-Ncube and Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams

(Picture: Andile Mahlaba)

also complaining saying they can't continue with their online classes since they are currently home because of the lockdown," she said.

Dube-Ncube said there are few municipalities that stand to benefit during this initial phase of the roll out. These include uMgungundlovu, Amajuba, Umhlathuze, King Cetshwayo, eThekweni, uThukela, Kokstad and Msunduzi. She said other municipalities will follow as they intend to cover the whole province.

"As Government we would like to see municipalities also using this in their revenue collection initiatives. We are going to need you Minister (Ndabeni-Abrahams) to roll it out," said Dube-Ncube.

She said the free Wi-Fi will be accessible as far as the Edendale Hospital and even at the taxi ranks in the Pietermaritzburg CBD. She said Government wants to provide free Wi-Fi to all the people of KwaZulu-Natal because that can help in the creation of job opportunities.

"When this tower was erected it was the people from this area who were hired and the same was done in Imbali, Edendale and Elandskop. We also used material that is made locally and the other material was made at the Dube Tradeport," she said.

She added that the 3D printing project that was also launched by Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams is also critical as it sharpens the children's

thinking while they make their toys.

Information technology expert Dr Rolls said: "We saw a gap in the rural areas where the mobile network was still a challenge. We went to the local Chief to ask if we could work together tackle this problem and then proceeded to the Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs only to find out that they were already planning something like this so that made things easier."

Dr Rolls said with the Vezokuhle project they wanted to show that it is possible to have digital technology in the rural areas. Rolls said the broadband is accessible more than 40km away in all the way to Elandskop and uMshwati Municipality.

Dr Rolls added that MEC Dube-Ncube asked them to use locally-produced infrastructure to empower local small businesses and also reduce costs. "This work was done by 21 entrepreneurs because the aim was to create job opportunities through this project."

Dr Rolls also launched another exciting project at Vezokuhle which will see pupils learning robotics and using drones.

"We want the pupils to have an opportunity to learn how to use drones even if they are not studying science. We also want children from rural areas to be exposed to technology so that they can also think of business ideas they can use it on."

There was much excitement when the pupils of Vezokuhle were given an opportunity to try their hand at assembling robots and flying drones.

## LOCAL ECONOMY

# Msunduzi Municipality supports local economy

by Anathi Mtaka

ALL over the world there is a consensus amongst experts that the COVID-19 outbreak has had a devastating impact on the economy. As part of the efforts to ensure that the local economy recovers from this, Msunduzi Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla visited the cigarettes producer, ATM Tobacco Manufacturers which is based in Mkonteni.

ATM Director Mr Yusuf Kajee said: "We've spent R500 million getting cigarettes from the plant where we make them in Zimbabwe to here in Msunduzi. Now we are building a new factory that is 10 000m<sup>2</sup> big. We decided to invest more because Zimbabwe and South Africa are the countries that have the best tobacco in the world."

He said they anticipated to hire at least 200 people in the construction of the factory.

"We can do this in two ways – we can use the technology or employ people to do the job. We would rather create jobs so we're going to hire people which is not easy but it will benefit a lot of people," said Mr Kajee.

ATM is one of the businesses that are allowed to operate under level 3 of the lockdown so they are continuing with their production of cigarettes even though the sale

of tobacco products is currently not permitted in South Africa.

Kajee said: "We are producing cigarettes for export because trade between countries is currently permitted. What we are currently not producing the brands sold in South Africa since the sale of tobacco products is currently banned."

He said it was a mystery to him why South Africans did not like buying ATM cigarettes because they are cheaper but they would rather buy expensive brands imported from other countries.

"Our people prefer expensive things because they think it makes those brands superior. What they don't understand is that it's the added costs for transporting those things that make them more expensive. We are not greedy, if we make a profit of 50 cents we have no problem unlike those who want to make a profit of R1 or R2 then end up having their product sitting on the shelves," he said.

He said they know how critical, more particularly at the moment, for their staff to get their salaries. Therefore, even though they cannot have the entire staff complement back at work due to COVID-19 regulations, all of them still get their salaries in full.

"We know that pressure that the Government is under to ensure that everyone has water. We use about 30 000 litres a day so we decided to



Mayor Thebolla, Mr Kajee and Cllr Jabu Ngubo (Picture: Andile Mahlaba)

drill boreholes so that we don't waste water and add more burden on the Government," he said.

Kajee said their other efforts to assist the Government was to build a police station in their area.

"This industrial area now has a police station close by. It's about seven kilometres away. We want others who are passionate about the preservation of our City to also prioritise the issue of safety, they must know that the nearest police station is close by. We have other

programmes we are planning to do with the South African Police Services but those were disrupted by the national lockdown," he said.

The police station also has a holding cell. He said their other programmes of giving back to the community was opening a centre for playing chess. He said they recently completed construction of a place to sell food where public servants will get their meals at half price.

"The African continent is very rich but we have to change the way

our children think because they are our future. We also have to encourage them to think about creating job opportunities instead of waiting for someone to employ them."

Councillor Mehmood Omar said: "It's always been my wish to see this work reach this level. I see this growth as a great thing because it is going to benefit the people of Msunduzi. We know that the future of this City is dependent on our ability to retain businesses and attract new investors."

Mayor Thebolla extended his gratitude on behalf of the people of Msunduzi.

"The truth is I didn't know that there were so many things happening here. What is of importance on our part as the City is to ensure that the local economy gets a boost and jobs are created so that people are able to support their children and fight poverty. I give you my assurance that we will support your efforts to expand your business because we believe that you will go a long way," said the Mayor.

He concluded that he would also like to see them embark on the skills development programmes targeted at the previously disadvantaged at which Kajee gave his commitment that it would be done.

# Jika Joe flats Phase 3 almost complete

by Siyethaba Mhlongo

**T**HERE'S been several challenges in the project that is aimed at addressing the housing need at the Jika Joe informal settlement but things are now going smoothly.

Project Manager in Msunduzi's Human Settlement Unit, Mr Phumlani Mbeje said: "The project is divided into four phases, which is phase 1, phase 2 then we've got phase 3 which is sub-divided into A and B."

Mbeje said the development is currently on phase 3 which is being constructed at the former Tarterm Sports Field next to the Jika Joe informal settlement.

"We decided to start with this phase because most of the land that is going to be used for construction currently has shacks on it. There are currently about 3002 shacks there which will all have to be demolished so that construction can continue with the other phases of the project."

He added that the Municipality is mindful of the fact that not all the shack dwellers will qualify for accommodation in the flats because they would have to pay rent and some cannot afford to. He said this requires the Municipality to build RDP houses for those who will not be able to pay rent.

"Land has already been identified for their houses at Signal Hill and eThembeni," said Mbeje.

He said the flats that are currently under construction at Jika Joe are part of the rental stock. Prospective tenants will have to produce proof of monthly income of between R800 and R3500.

"Our investigations indicated that there is a large number of immigrants living at Jika Joe, we are talking about at least 36% of the

area's population."

"People who fall under the housing category that is dependent on income are 782 and that's where we check how much you earn from zero income to R3500 a month. Then we have another 784 who qualify for government housing so they will go to the areas that have been identified for those developments.

"You also have 800 others who earn between R800 and R3500. Those who qualify for the project that is currently under construction are 1023, which is 34% of the total population of Jika Joe," said Mbeje.

He said anyone earning more than R3500 qualifies for social housing which is often found in areas next to the CBD.

"Initially the Jika Joe flats were categorised as a social housing project but then it was realised that the people living there moved closer to town because of jobs but they did not make enough to commute or afford expensive rent and that's how they ended up building shacks," said Mbeje.

He further explained that the Municipality previously tried to build houses for Jika Joe residents, which is how many of them ended up with properties that they are renting out in France.

He said the mistake that was made during the inception of that project was to ignore the reasons the shack dwellers had moved closer to town to begin with. As a result, many of them have never relocated to their proper houses in France.

"The Municipality then decided that instead of relocating people, it is going to build them proper accommodation wherever they are. This will also help those who are currently renting shacks because they have nowhere else to stay. You'd be shocked to learn how much they pay in rent every month. The minimum



Community residential units built at Jika Joe (Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

is R500 for a shack that doesn't even have water and electricity," said Mbeje.

He said this was amongst the reasons the Municipality decided not to make the Jika Joe flats a social housing project. This delayed the project as Msunduzi had to go and explain to the Department of Housing Settlement – which is funding the project – why it wanted to have a community residential unit (CRU) development in the CBD which is not

the norm when it comes to housing projects.

Mbeje said they targeted December for the completion of phase 3 because they want to relocate temporary housing before the project continues."

He said the other government housing development is running behind because it is still at the planning stage.

"The initial plan was to have both projects running parallel to each other because that would have made it easier to move people and relocate them to where they need to go."

## SAFETY

# Msunduzi Municipality ready to deal with fires

by Siyethaba Mhlongo

SIX months ago Msunduzi appointed the service provider, Surg Sut, to manage its New England Road Landfill Site. This came after the facility had several unexplainable fires erupting over the past year. The arrival of Surg Sut resulted in the curb on these fires as the company regulated public access into the site. However, after not seeing a single fire since Surg Sut's appointment another blaze erupted recently which saw security guards calling for help around midnight on July 20.

Senior Manager: Waste, Mr Wilson Mhlongo, who joined Msunduzi in April said it was always at the back of their minds that there could be a fire at the landfill site so there was a plan in place on how to manage it so that it was contained quickly.

"What we can say is that we've ensured that there were no waste pickers around when the fire started, especially since some of them had made a habit of sleeping inside the landfill site in the past. We are now enforcing that rule of the prohibition

of anyone to be inside the landfill site from 5pm. Only the security guards are permitted inside the facility in the evenings.

"However we can't run away from the fact that the fence that was installed has been vandalised but we are not sure whether it was damaged so that someone could come inside and ignite the fire so we are still investigating that," said Mhlongo

He added that working together with Surg Sut made it easier to contain the fire in one section unlike the previous occasions where the blaze ended up all over the landfill site.

"One of the plans we have in place as part of regulating the landfill site is to ensure that we separate the waste into small sections until we compact. This made it easier for even the fire engines to drive through these sections to get to where the fire was which made extinguishing it quicker."

The recent inferno came hot in the heels of the official reopening of the weighbridge which has been repaired as part of the efforts of regulating the waste that is disposed at the landfill site. In the past it was found that some of the waste streams were the cause of

the fires as they ignited into flames by themselves.

"The weighbridge helped us regulate which waste is brought into this facility but we must also add that waste on its own produces a gas called methane which makes it

**“The appointment of Surg Sut really helped us because they have been securing the landfill site which is why they quickly picked up that there was a fire**

easy for fires to start. It also makes it difficult to notice that fire quickly until it's caused extensive damage or when there are flames but at times there'll be no flames and all you'll see is just smoke," said Mhlongo.

He said it took three water tankers, two fire engines, two pay

loaders and a compactor to prevent the blaze from escaping to other sections of the landfill site. He added that the uMgungundlovu District Municipality gave them one fire truck and its fire fighters while the Department of Environmental Affairs also assisted with a team from Working on Fire who came armed with their firefighting equipment and Durban Metro also sent fire trucks with teams. He said all these teams came the morning of the fire.

"The challenge that we have now is the shortage of plant equipment at the landfill site but we were able to use what we had even though it was not enough. What's good though is that the Municipality has allocated funds for the procurement of plant equipment in its 2020/21 budget and that's going to make a lot of difference at the landfill site."

He added that the compactor that had been hired failed to do what they needed it for so they were waiting for the company to send another one.

"This was not a normal fire because burned in multiple areas so it was not easy to just focus on one section and that's what led to it taking an entire week to completely

extinguish," he said.

General Manager for the Community Services business unit, Mr Mbongeni Mathe, under which the waste department falls, said: "The appointment of Surg Sut really helped us because they have been securing the landfill site which is how they quickly picked up that there was a fire. The challenge with the fire of this kind is that you can't put it out like you would do with a grass fire where you just pour water and it's gone. Such fires need you to dig into the waste so that you direct water to the source because the gas has the ability to make it burn over a large area underneath the surface."

Mathe extended his apology to people of Msunduzi for the inconvenience caused by the fire.

"We know that it's not good to have a fire burning at the landfill site and that's why we do everything in our power to make sure that is quickly extinguished and we also have strategies to contain it so that the entire landfill site does not end up in flames. The assistance that we receive from other stakeholders and other spheres of government also make a huge difference," said Mathe.

# Msunduzi is a COVID-19 hotspot

by Siyethaba Mhlongo

ACCORDING to the latest reports from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health the uMgungundlovu District is now in the second position in terms of the number of infections in the province and its Msunduzi Local Municipality has the most confirmed cases.

It is not just Msunduzi residents that have contracted this virus but more than 60 municipal employees have also tested positive, fortunately there has been no fatalities and some of those infected have recovered and even returned to work.

The leadership of the District working with their counterpart in Msunduzi have resolved to embark on an awareness campaign to educate the public on what they need to do to protect themselves from Covid-19.

Last week the District Mayor, Councillor Thobekile Maphumulo, led the delegation with councillors from Msunduzi on a loud hailing exercise in the Pietermaritzburg CBD where they warned people against gathering in crowds as this is in contravention of the lockdown regulations which are aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19.

She encouraged the public to heed the directives issued by President Cyril Ramaphosa which include the regular washing of hands, gargling with salty warm water and wearing masks. She also appealed to those who can afford to buy hand sanitisers and keep using it wherever they go.

“The President recently announced that wearing a mask is mandatory so if you go anywhere without one you are in contravention of the regulation. Please don’t be found flouting the regulation when this is avoidable. I also plead with



One of government’s grants pay point (Pictures: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

you to always ensure that there is social distancing between you and the next person so that we can prevent further infections,” said Mayor Maphumulo.

She also touched on the issue of funerals saying the number of people is still limited to 50.

“Yes it’s painful not to be able to bury those close to you but we need to abstain during this period.”

She said parents must also change the way they have been doing things such as taking their children to town with them.



Speaker Cllr Eunice Majola-Zondi

“Children must only come with you when they need to get

medical help, don’t drag them with you if you are going to buy food, please leave them at home,” she said.

She also asked the taxi operators to also sanitise their vehicles on a regular basis in order to ensure the safety of their passengers.

“We encourage those that know what needs to be done to also share their knowledge with others so that everyone is aware otherwise we are going to run out of burial space because of people who are going against the regulations that are in place.”

Msunduzi Mayor Mzimkhulu Thebolla said: “We appeal to everyone to follow the guidelines that have been issued by the Department of Health and the World Health Organisation. Mayor Maphumulo has covered most of the things but we also call on the employers to sanitise their work places to protect their staff.”

“Everyone must also remember to wear their masks and stop leaving when it is not necessary to do so. If we all do this diligently Msunduzi will not be Covid-19 haven.”

Msunduzi council Speaker, Councillor Eunice Majola-Zondi said their aim as the leadership is to take the awareness campaign to communities so that all Msunduzi residents are alert.

“We can see that the number of infections keep going up so it is important for us to play our part to protect the people of Msunduzi. We know that the information has also been filtered to communities through radio, television and social media networks but we have to emphasise to them that we can beat this virus if we adhere to the regulations.”

Majola-Zondi added that the Msunduzi Municipality has also been monitoring the government social grants pay points to ensure that the regulations are not flouted.

“We decided to deploy the bylaw enforcement officers to monitor the social grants pay points. We know that enforcing the regulations is not the same as expecting people to adhere by themselves. That is why we also have teams going around the CBD making sure that people keep their masks on at all times. We are doing this because we want to ensure that our residents are aware of the situation and they don’t find themselves charged for contravening the regulations as a result of us not playing our part to ensure that they are aware of what they should do.”

# Working with all community stakeholders

by Siyethaba Mhlongo

THE outbreak of Covid-19 showed just how much government departments need to work in synergy in order to respond effectively. However, it was not just the spheres of government that needed to work together but the business community also needed to play its part. Sign Wood is amongst the companies that have heeded the call by donating 30 000 masks to the residents of Msunduzi so that they can protect themselves from the virus.

Sign Wood’s Mr Dieter Kusel said: “We recently started installing the fibre network so we felt that we should also do something for the residents because we are working within their community.”

He said they felt that it was important to make such donation on top of creating job opportunities for the locals.

“In Msunduzi alone we have employed 1500 people which we know will be able to put food on the table for at least nine to 12 months. We know that there will be other job opportunities that we come up with because once the installation is done the network will still need to be maintained.”

their company to be able to leave a mark in Msunduzi something that people will always remember them by. He said the people employed by their company are developed in skills that they will be able to use when they look for other jobs in future.

He said what is of importance to them is to empower those who do not have any skills to a level where they also know how the fibre network works.

“We didn’t just stop at hiring local people but we also give opportunities to small businesses in Msunduzi who we bring on board to install the network in people’s homes,” he said.

He said they decided to donate masks because they know that everyone is struggling at the moment so while everyone needs to protect themselves from the virus, it is not all of them that can afford to buy masks.

Deputy Mayor Manilal Inderjit said: “We welcome the donation of the three-ply masks which is an initiative the company put together specifically for the residents of Msunduzi. We know that this is a small quantity when compared to the number of people in Msunduzi but it will surely make a difference.”

He said the Municipality thought it would be better to distribute the masks at hospitals, schools and shops because these are the areas frequented



Northdale Hospital has benefited from the donations

(Picture: Andile Mahlaba)

by a large number of people.

“We’ve identified Northdale and Edendale hospitals as well as Supersave because most people shop there and the media has also been focusing there a lot even the Minister of Police General Bheki Cele visited Supersave to assess whether they were adhering to Covid-19 regulations,” said the Deputy Mayor.

He said it is their wish to prevent incidents where people are sent away from any place because they are not wearing masks so Sign Wood’s donation will help address that.

“We know there is a lot of red tape whenever we as the Municipality try to buy something so we welcome this generous donation and we would like to encourage other companies to also

make similar contributions,” he said.

Manilal said they are targeting schools with pupils from needy homes because they do not want any child turned away from schools because they do not have a mask as it recently happened in Bulwer where a child ended being assaulted.

He said they are also aware that there are opportunists who are always looking to take advantage of the poor and they believe that the Sign Wood’s masks donation will help protect the venerable from those.

Acting Chief Executive Officer at Northdale Hospital, Mrs Kholeka Makhathini said: “We would like to extend our gratitude to the Deputy Mayor for all his efforts in always ensuring that our hospital is taken care of. As we all know our hospital has been severely impacted by Covid-19, as things stand we are leading in terms of the numbers of infections in Msunduzi.”

She concluded by saying the pandemic did not just affect their patients but also the hospital’s staff. She said the donations they received from the Municipality and companies are going to help them beat the virus.

“We also appreciate seeing the leadership of the area because that motivates us as employees to work even harder because we can see that our efforts are recognised,” she said.



### **NGABE UNENKINGA NESIQASHI NOMA NOMASITENDA WAKHO?**

Isigungu esengamele ezokuqashisa KwaZulu-Natal sisungulelwe ukuxazulula izinkinga ezivelayo phakathi kwabantu abaqashiselene ezindaweni abahlala kuzo (AMA-FLATS, UMJONDOLO, "EMQASHWENI", I-HOSTELA, COTTAGE).

- ❖ Kungabe uyaludinga ulwazi mayelana namalungelo akho njengesiQashi okanye uMasitenda?
- ❖ Kungabe uyaludinga ulwazi mayelana nesivumelwano esibhaliwe sokuqashiselana (Lease Agreements)
- Kungabe usuke wahlangabezana nokuhlukumezeka okufana nalokhu okulandelayo: (Ukunganakekelwa kwendawo; Ukungena ngenkani noma ukuvimbela ukungena endlini; Ukusabisana; Ukungakhokhwa kwe-Rent; Ukungabuyi kwemali yesibambiso (Deposit); Ukuhlala ngokucinana; Ukuphuka kwempahla; Ukucishelwa amanzi nogesi ngaphandle kwemvuma yenkantolo.
- ❖ Faka isikhalazo sakho kwisigungu (KZNRHT) noma kumkhandlu osondelene nawo
- ❖ Isikhalazo sakho sizoxazululeka ezinyangeni ezithathu
- ❖ Ungazithatheli umthetho ezandleni zakho; sebenzisa ilungelo lakho ngendlela eyamukelekile
- ❖ Vikela ilungelo lakho lokungaphathwa ngendlela engamukelekile

### **Vakashela ihhovisi likaMaspala wangakini:**

#### **Human Settlements - Housing Unit**

**Physical Address:** 4th Floor, 19 Gallwey Lane,  
Pietermaritzburg, 3201  
**Tel. No. :** 033 392 2104/3776

#### **NOMA**

**Physical Address:** 9th Floor Eagle Building (Murchies Passage),  
353-363 Dr. Pixley ka Seme (West Street),  
DURBAN, 4001  
**Postal Address :** Private Bag x54328, DURBAN, 4000  
**Tel. No. :** 031 372 1800/3/4/6/8  
**Email :** [info.rht@kzndhs.gov.za](mailto:info.rht@kzndhs.gov.za)



## **THE MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY**

### **MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY**

#### **SUPPLIES AND SERVICES CONTRACT No. 37 OF 2020** **HIRING OF PORTABLE CHEMICAL TOILETS** **TENDER NOTICE**

The Msunduzi Municipality hereby invites tenders from suitably qualified and experienced Service Providers for the hiring of portable chemical toilets. **Only tenderers with B-BBEE Contributor Levels of 1 and 2 will be considered for appointment.**

Tender documents will be made available to tenderers from **12h00 on Monday, 03 August 2020.**

Tender documents can be downloaded and printed at the tenderer's cost from the National Treasury eTender Publication Portal on [www.etenders.gov.za](http://www.etenders.gov.za).

Printed copies of the tender documents shall also be available from the Supply Chain Management Unit Offices, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, A S Chetty Centre, 333 Church Street, Pietermaritzburg, as from the abovementioned date and time, at a non-refundable tender deposit fee of **R568.10 (including VAT)** for each document drawn.

Any enquiries or questions relating to this tender must be forwarded to Phiwe Mthlane (Supply Chain Management Unit) on e-mail address [phiwe.mthlane@msunduzi.gov.za](mailto:phiwe.mthlane@msunduzi.gov.za). A consolidated response will be published onto the Msunduzi Municipality's website seven (7) calendar days before the date of tender closing. **Note that no enquiries or questions will be attended to in the last seven (7) calendar days before the date of tender closing.**

Tenders contained in sealed envelopes and marked with "**Supplies and Services Contract No. 37 of 2019**" and the **Contract Description** must be placed in the Tender Box located in the Foyer, Ground Floor, City Hall, 169 Chief Albert Luthuli Street (formerly Commercial Road), Pietermaritzburg, 3201, not later than **12h00 on Friday, 04 September 2020**, when they will be publicly opened. Only tenders placed in the Tender Box shall be accepted.

**Tender Validity Period:** Four (4) months commencing from the closing date of tender.

**Tender Adjudication/Evaluation Criteria:** The tender shall be evaluated on--: 80/20 Preference Point System in accordance with the Preferential Procurement Regulations 2017, issued in terms of section 5 of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, Act No. 5 of 2000.

The Msunduzi Municipality does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender and reserves the right to accept the whole or any part of a tender. Each tenderer will be informed of the tender result. The Msunduzi Municipality expects businesses within the Pietermaritzburg and Midlands Region to support its contract and BEE/SMME initiatives.

**MR. M.P KHATHIDE: CITY MANAGER**



## **THE MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY**

### **SCM 3 OF 20/21**

#### **APPOINTMENT OF A SERVICE PROVIDER FOR THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF CLEAR VIEW FENCING AT NORTHDAL LIBRARY** **TENDER NOTICE**

The Msunduzi Municipality hereby invites tenders from suitably qualified and experienced for the **Supply, Installation of Fencing a Library**. Only tenderers with **CIDB grading of 2SQ or higher** will be considered for appointment. Tender documents will be made available to tenderers from **12h00 on Thursday, 06 August 2020.**

Tender documents can be downloaded and printed at the tenderer's cost from the National Treasury eTender Publication Portal on [www.etenders.gov.za](http://www.etenders.gov.za).

Printed copies of the tender documents shall also be available from the **Supply Chain Management Unit Offices, 5th Floor, A S Chetty Centre, 333 Church Street, Pietermaritzburg**, as from the abovementioned date and time, at a **non-refundable** tender deposit fee of **R226.55 (including VAT)** for each document drawn. Only cash, bank guaranteed cheques or EFT payments will be accepted. A copy of the Tender Deposit Receipt must be attached to the tender document (if purchased at the Municipality).

Any enquiries or questions relating to this tender must be forwarded to **Phiwe Mthlane** (Supply Chain Management Unit) on e-mail address [phiwe.mthlane@msunduzi.gov.za](mailto:phiwe.mthlane@msunduzi.gov.za). A consolidated response will be published onto the Msunduzi Municipality's website seven (7) calendar days before the date of tender closing. Note that no enquiries or questions will be attended to in the last seven (7) calendar days before the date of tender closing.

Tenders contained in sealed envelopes and marked with "**SCM 42 OF 19/20**" and the Contract Description must be placed in the **Tender Box** located in the **Foyer, Ground Floor, City Hall, 169 Chief Albert Luthuli Street (formerly Commercial Road), Pietermaritzburg, 3201**, not later than **12h00 on Monday, 07 September 2020**, when they will be publicly opened. Only tenders placed in the Tender Box shall be accepted.

**Tender Validity Period:** Four (4) months commencing from the closing date of tender.

**Tender Adjudication/Evaluation Criteria:** The tender shall be evaluated on a Two Stage Evaluation System – Stage One: Functionality and Stage Two: 80/20 Preference Point System in accordance with the Preferential Procurement Regulations 2017, issued in terms of section 5 of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, Act No. 5 of 2000. The Functionality for Stage One shall be evaluated on the following criteria:-

No.	Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points
1	Number of previously completed clear view fencing for the value of up to R550 000 per project (excluding VAT).	20 Points
2	Experience of Site Foreman / Site Agent in Structural Steel Construction projects.	10 Points
3	Trade tested Artisans	20 Points Total
<b>Functionality Points Threshold to Qualify for Stage Two</b>		<b>50 Points (40 Points)</b>

The Msunduzi Municipality does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender and reserves the right to accept the whole or any part of a tender. Each tenderer will be informed of the tender result.

The Msunduzi Municipality expects businesses within the Pietermaritzburg and Midlands Region to support its contract and BEE/SMME initiatives.

**MR M KHATHIDE (CITY MANAGER)**



## **THE MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY**

### **YOUTH ENTERPRISE PARK ADVISORY BOARD**

The Msunduzi Municipal Sustainable Development and City Entities, Development Services sub-unit is calling on applications to contribute in the Youth Enterprise Park Advisory Board for 3 years. To carry out the following responsibilities:

- The advisory board will need to identify and agree on the appropriate Institutional Entity to manage the facility (i.e. a cooperative, company or NGO etc.).
- Guiding the Management entity and assist in making executive decisions on the function of the YEP.
- The Board will convene Quarterly
- The participants on the advisory board will be "partners" in ensuring the success of the YEP.
- The Advisory Board will advise on securing long-term operational funding for the YEP.
- To prepare Terms of References and tender for appointment of Management Entity to run the YEP
- Provide the necessary links necessary to support the facility particularly in terms of providing municipal functions to the YEP.
- Outsourcing government-funding programmes that can benefit the Facility.

Please Note: Candidates must have a professional portfolio in Legal, accounting/finance, community leadership role, youth organisation, entrepreneurial space, training, research and development, with experience of at least 3-5 years. The Advisory Board will be put in place to provide support and guidance to the YEP. The members will not draw an income from the Facility for being on the Board; this is for experience and to support youth empowerment.

Application form will be available on the Msunduzi Municipality website, Professor Nyembezi building 9th floor, City Hall and Tourism Hub by 31 July 2020. Please submit application form with portfolio of evidence, CV, and supporting documents to: Mandisa.msimgang@msunduzi.gov.za contact number 033 392 3757 or simtholile.myeni@msunduzi.gov.za contact number 033 392 2842. closing date for submission is 14 August 2020.



## **THE MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

#### **REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY SCOTTSVILLE AND SURROUNDS LOCAL AREA PLAN**

The Public is hereby advised of the Msunduzi Municipality's Draft Scottsville and Surrounds Local Area Plan, 2020. The draft document is available on the municipal website for your comments.

Written comments may be lodged with the Town Planning unit, Siphesihle Zondi (Tel 033 392 3048), by e-mail to [Siphesihle.zondi@msunduzi.gov.za](mailto:Siphesihle.zondi@msunduzi.gov.za), or hand delivered to the Town Planning Offices, 5th Floor, Professor Nyembezi Building, 341 Church Street, Pietermaritzburg, or by post to Private Bag X 1393, Pietermaritzburg, 3200 by Friday 28 August 2020.

**Mr. M.P Khathide, City Manager**  
City Hall, Pietermaritzburg

# Plan to fast-track transfer of properties

by **Siyethaba Mhlongo**

It has become a norm for the transfer of property to take a long time after the sale has been finalised. This has had a negative impact on the local economy because investors end up changing their minds while waiting for the transfer to go ahead.

In order to address this and make property transfer quicker for all the parties, the City has upped its game to ensure that the rates clearance certificates no longer take months to be released.

Head of the Rates Department Mr Moges Pillay said: “Now we have a system where the conveyancers will do their applications online from wherever they are and anytime of the day so they don’t have to spend their time coming to our offices to submit the applications.”

He said this new E4 system is more convenient because everything is done digitally and the applicants can track their applications so they do not have to call the five departments that have to sign-off on them just to see how far their applications are in the process.

Pillay said: “We can’t run away from the fact that applications used to take between four to five months. It was also easy for corruption to take place like the bribing of officials to fast-track the applications so that they could be resolved quicker.”

The affected departments that applications have to go through include; the Consolidated Billing section, Credit Control, Sundry



**Mr Moges Pillay** (Picture: Igunundu Agency/Siyethaba Mhlongo)

Debtors, Housing and Valuations. Pillay said the applications have to go to the Housing Department so that they can confirm that the property is registered to the person named on the documents then the valuations unit verifies that the property on the application is really on the stated physical address section then the credit control officials have

to check how much it owed to the Municipality.

“It’s easy to use the E4 system and the applicants can keep track of their application and see where the hold-up is but it also helps me monitor each application as well and see which official is delaying the process.”

Pillay said the great thing about

the system is that everything is done electronically so there will no longer be a problem of applications getting lost in officials’ offices.

“The aim of using this system is so that all the affected units are able to work in synergy so there would be no cases where applications are delayed because someone is not at work. It also reduces paper work

because we receive an average of 400 applications with at least 15 pages each.”

He added that the signing of the applications as well issuing of the certificate is also done on the E4 system and that is accepted at the deeds office.

“This system is going to strengthen the relationship between the Municipality and businesses because it will make it easy to buy properties, which is also going to assist the Municipality in the collection of revenue for the delivery of services,” said Pillay.

Msunduzi started piloting the E4 system in September because it wanted to see if it could work for its residents and those wanting to invest here. It started with four law firms who used it to lodge their applications and 32 were submitted which were processed within 10 days.

Pillay said: “What makes using this system quicker is that once the applications is in, departments don’t have to wait their turn to complete their section so they can go onto the application and work on it as soon as it is lodged.”

Pillay conceded while the E4 system is great, they still have a challenge of vacancies within the rates department which first had to be advertised internally before external candidates are invited to apply.

“We’ve advertised five posts internally so that we can ensure that we continue with the work that we’ve told the public we are doing,” said Pillay.

## TOURISM

# Msunduzi developing Vulindlela into tourist attraction

by **Anathi Mtaka**

TOURISM is amongst the biggest contributors to this country’s economy. Last year the tourism industry contributed R139 billion to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is 2,8% of the total GDP.

When the Tourism Minister Mrs Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane opened the museum in Howick early this year, she urged the residents of uMgungundlovu and traditional leaders to get involved in rural tourism. The Msunduzi Municipality has heeded the Minister’s call.

The Msunduzi Pietermaritzburg Tourism Association (MPTA) together with Msunduzi are planning to develop the Henley Dam into a recreational site and this is part of the plans to develop a Vulindlela Tourism Route. The aim of the project is to stimulate tourism and rural economy in this area which has been left out of the sector.

During a visit to Henley Dam the Chairperson for the Sustainable Development and City Entities Portfolio Committee, Councillor Sibongile Mkhize, said there was a consensus that the area of Vulindlela can be a tourism attraction but other parties felt that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done since even the access roads are problematic.

While there are posh houses built next to the dam but municipal services are still a challenge. There are gravel roads, inconsistent water supply and illegal dumping is rife.



**Henley Dam** (Picture: Andile Mahlaba)

Councillor Mkhize said: “There’s a lot we can do with this place but first we have to address these challenges starting with the road. We can’t wait expect progress unless people are able to travel in and out of this place.”

She said she will first take the matter of Henley Dam to her portfolio committee so that members can discuss it and make

the necessary recommendations to Council before the relevant departments are engaged, amongst which will be the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

The Director of the MPTA Mr Dumisani Mhlongo said they will need assistance to fence the perimeter of the dam so that they can regulate access and also develop

an area where vendors will be able to sell their wares.

The plan is also for the dam to be used for events and those who may want to come just to enjoy the outdoors and the environment. Mhlongo said the tourism project will integrate aspects of cultural tourism.

As part of the route, tourists will visit areas such as eNtembeni,

where one of the attractions will be grave of the famous diviner who lived during King Shaka Zulu’s era, Nobhiyana Madondo. The site is internationally known for the annual gathering of diviners who descend from all over the world to pay their respects to Madondo.

Mr Moses Ndlela of the Henley Guest House received the news of the tourism route project with enthusiasm saying it is what the community has long been calling for.

“The community of this area want this development but all our previous pleas were not answered. We are happy that the Municipality has finally recognised that the dam can be a catalyst for economic development in Msunduzi but we have to start by addressing the issue of infrastructure.”

Ndlela said the area is already attracting tourists from other countries who come and stay there ahead of the Mandela Day Marathon but they were disappointed to always find the area not showing any progress in terms of development.

He said crime is also one of the biggest challenges faced by the residents of Henley Dam with their homes being broken into and cars stolen on a regular basis.

“The Municipality must look into installing cameras on all the exit roads because tourist will not come here if they do not feel safe. There’s no point in having great facilities if we can’t get people to come out here and enjoy them,” said Ndlela.