

**Remarks by Belinda Echeozonjoku, Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Development Planning**

Fellow Councillors,  
Members of the Media.  
Residents of Joburg

The Department of Development Planning is a critical department of the City.

When we talk about rebuilding Joburg, this is meant in the truest sense.

The Department is charged with among other things, building law enforcement, land use management, planning control and enforcement.

Development Planning was also tasked with being the champion or coordinating department for the Inner-City Rejuvenation project.

While it is not the responsibility of government to create jobs, the work that is done through the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) creates jobs. This includes the 5th Road Bridge Project, which we completed in record time, creating 31 jobs, and empowering 6 SMMEs.

There are a number of such projects across the City, which Cllr Dada Morero and his co-conspirators are only happy to get their hands on and manipulate in such a way that workmanship will be substandard, prices inflated and channelled to the corrupt.

There were previously 15 board members at the JDA who were mostly ineffective. We have appointed a new board of nine.

We appointed a top-notch Executive Director, Mr Zunaid Khan, who previously worked at The Presidency.

Members of the media,

The Braamfischerville Gravel Road, which the JDA was overseeing had not been completed, yet two contractors were paid. I conducted an oversight inspection and there was nothing to show for it.

R94-million was spent with residents suffering under the watch of the previous administration.

We recently appointed a contractor to complete the job.

Another example is the Diepsloot Public Environment Upgrade, which cost R15-million under the ANC, yet there was nothing to show for this spend. We appointed a new contractor for this project.

Furthermore, the Selby Upgrade, which cost R38-million was not complete because the contractor ran into financial problems.

No due diligence was done.

Alarminglly, we also found out that the same contractor was working on the Diepsloot Public Environment Upgrade.

We also found that under the watch of the previous JDA board, payments were being made to contractors not using the City's accounting system.

This is the style of governance we can expect now that the corrupt have the pin code to the City's bank account.

We have instituted investigations, but rest assured those investigations will not reach their logical conclusion under the ANC.

Colleagues,

We have also made strides in bettering the department.

We development and implemented the Department's online Construction Permit Management System (CPMS), which was not being finalised for two years by the previous administration.

A few weeks ago, in a single week, the department processed over 1600 of these 100 building plans which includes 103 RDP houses.

It's unfortunate that already payments that were made by the department to MTC last week, had never reached the service provider and no one can account why the service provider had not been paid by MTC, which will stall the progress.

We initiated the digital archiving which had not been touched for years, despite the Sec79 putting the department on notice due to staff lives being put at risk by the working conditions.

We have improved services to developers and the City's property owners by initiating recruitment for key technical vacancies in land use management and building development management.

In some instances, we extended the contracts of key experienced officials that are nearing retirement.

In my role as the MMC responsible for the Inner-City, we took hold of CBD zoning compliance and planning enforcement through Integrated block-by-block Operations in urban decay hotspots.

We reviewed and updated the Department's Outdoor Advertising by-law and policy, which will go out for public inputs.

We initiated the digital twin project which will assist in how we see Joburg in the next 3-5 years.

We also started mapping all township applications to see exactly and track these in relation to how we view where the City is going and where infrastructure is desperately in need for upgrade which will inform budget allocation.

Mapping the ECD's per region had also started, in order to assist in regularising them and reviewing the tariffs for ECD's in townships to assist them to comply with National Building Regulations.

The Municipal Planning Tribunal had an 18-month backlog of objections and appeals, and we were making significant progress in clearing this backlog. We have also requested for new external experts to be selected onto the Tribunal to ensure the highest expertise is overseeing land use and building objections and appeals.

One of my proudest moments was when Council adopted the Urban Development Framework (UDF) for the area known as 'Frankenwald'.

The Frankenwald development will be characterised by high-density, mixed-use development, with an estimated residential yield of 30 000 residential units.

The project will further ensure the creation of job opportunities not only during the 10 to 15-year construction lifespan of the project but well after completion.

There will also be opportunities for local small, medium and micro enterprises to be empowered once construction commences.

This development presents an opportunity for the City to tackle apartheid spatial planning and give effect to the Mayoral Priority of building an inclusive City by providing affordable housing opportunities on well-located land in the City to those that live far from social and employment opportunities.

In my role as MMC Responsible, we also initiated the Precinct based approach to development in order to be business friendly & foster better collaboration with the private sector. This will make a huge difference in becoming a business friendly city, zoning and relaxing certain bylaws in particular precincts, creating opportunities to create jobs.

Indeed, the repair and rebuild of Joburg was underway. Developers, the construction industry and were beginning to see Joburg as place to invest in.

This will all come tumbling down under the new ANC administration.