

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF TSHWANE, CLLR RANDALL WILLIAMS

Greeting and acknowledgements

Madam Speaker,
Honourable Chief Kekana and his entourage,
Honourable Chief Mahlangu and his entourage,
Chief Whip of Council,
Leaders of executive business,
Members of the Mayoral Committee,
Chair of Chairs,
Chairpersons of Section 79 committees,
Leaders of all political parties represented in Council,
Honourable aldermen and councillors,
Officials and top management of the City of Tshwane,
Members of the media,
And residents of Tshwane

Introduction

Welcome to you all and thank you for joining me today at the State of the City Address.

Madam Speaker, I have always believed that the State of the City Address is a unique opportunity to present and highlight the journey that we have been taking in our great city. It is the moment where we reflect on the past, assess the present and look towards the future so we can plot a way ahead.

The saying goes that “a week is a long time in politics”. Well, most certainly, a year in politics is far longer. One year ago, there was no State of the City Address. One year ago, there were no councillors present in this chamber.

It was a time when the City was placed under administration, and for a period of eight months there were no elected councillors to represent and serve their constituents. Let

us take a moment to reflect on that and be grateful that we have once again returned to this chamber.

A year ago, South Africa entered lockdown to combat the spread of COVID-19. A lockdown which has had a lasting impact on our economy, and has fundamentally changed the way we work and interact with each other. A lockdown which is in fact still in place, albeit in a lighter and less restrictive form.

The COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to impact our city in every aspect of how it functions. It impacted the City's revenue as many residents faced significant financial difficulties. As a result, the operations of the City had to be refocused to deal with the pandemic and ensure that the municipality could operate in the face of COVID-19.

Funding had to be diverted to procure personal protective equipment and ensure regular deep cleaning. Screening and testing became an inherent part of the City's working operations. Meetings and engagements switched to being held virtually as it became safer and easier to interact and work remotely.

This very State of the City Address is being delivered in a hybrid model where we are working to ensure that we adhere to the relevant COVID-19 protocols while deploying all the technological means we have so that it is as inclusive as possible.

Madam Speaker, the task before us is immense. As the country faces a weakened economy, we must look to ways in which the City can provide support in stimulating growth and driving increased economic activity across Tshwane.

To do this means that we must provide an acceptable and affordable level of service delivery to our residents. It must be cost-effective, it must be efficient and it must be reliable. There can be no compromise in this regard.

Infrastructure development (utility services and housing)

Madam Speaker, this is why a core part of my ten-point plan involves ensuring that we prioritise the upgrading and maintenance of water and electricity infrastructure in Tshwane.

Our Utility Services Department is the custodian of billions of rand of electricity, water and sewerage infrastructure that are key to the provision of basic services to all Tshwane residents.

Despite the real challenges that the COVID-19 national state of disaster has had on our project timelines, the Utility Services Department has managed to spend almost 50% of its capital budget by mid-year, and is on track to spend at least 95% of the budget by year end.

While we have many projects on the go, I would like to highlight a few key achievements.

First, I am happy to report that the Baviaanspoort Waste Water Treatment Works project is 88% complete and is on track for completion in May 2021.

This R41 million project will restore the additional treatment capacity needed for the plant to ensure that the treated effluent released into the Pienaars River complies with national standards. This will stop further pollution of the Pienaars River and the Roodeplaat Dam downstream.

Second, the first phase of the multi-year project to upgrade Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Works is on track and the overall progress is at 40%, with the contractor expecting to be 50% done by the end of this financial year.

Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Works is the biggest water treatment plant in Tshwane and purifies 45% of the city's waste water. It will remain in operation during the upgrade project.

However, Phase 1 is just the start, of course. We are still planning on implementing Phase 2 and 3 over the next five years.

This is where it gets exciting. For years a big issue has always been the lack of funding to adequately address the issues at Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Works. The full cost of the project is estimated at approximately R2 billion. It is an immense financial cost.

Yesterday, I conducted a site visit at Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Works with the Minister for Water and Sanitation, Lindiwe Sisulu.

She was so impressed with the planning and progress that we have made that she has committed that her department will ensure that we receive all the necessary funding to ensure Phase 2 and 3 run seamlessly.

Through increased allocations via the Utility Services Development Grant, she has committed that her department will make sure that the City receives the funds that it needs to fully upgrade Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Works.

This second phase is due to start in the 2021/22 financial year and will provide an additional 80 megalitres of treatment capacity per day to facilitate new developments in its catchment area for the next 20 to 30 years.

This is a momentous achievement for the City and speaks to the hard work that has been put in by our teams to deliver to Tshwane residents.

In relation to electricity, I am pleased to report that the new Wildebees Infeed Substation, that will link to Eskom and the rest of the province, is on track to be completed by 2024 in partnership with Eskom.

This is a critical project that is needed to allow our city to grow, to supply the rapidly developing eastern areas of Tshwane and to strengthen the backup supply to many other substations.

We cannot encourage development in Tshwane without supplying the needed infrastructure to support it. With this project we are making a commitment to developers and residents that we can fix today's problems and build for tomorrow.

We are also at an advanced planning stage regarding the refurbishment of both the Mooikloof and Wapadrand Substations, which were damaged during fire incidents.

The Utility Services Department is also cognisant of the damage illegal connections inflict on our infrastructure and the reliability of supply, while endangering the residents of Tshwane. This year we have already conducted multiple removal operations and we will continue our efforts to protect our infrastructure and our people.

Our Human Settlements Department is also playing a crucial role in facilitating development across Tshwane.

Like other metropolitan municipalities, the City of Tshwane is not immune to urbanisation and its impact in as far as the increasing demand for safe places of shelter and affordable housing. Tshwane has a total of 227 informal settlements spread across its seven regions, with an estimated 345 710 households living in informal settlements.

The City has recently approved the Tshwane Informal Settlements Strategy which seeks to provide a clear short, medium and long-term plan that will guide the incremental upgrading of informal settlements in Tshwane.

The strategy will be largely funded through the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Partnership Grant and will be focused on providing basic services like water, sewerage

infrastructure and electricity in informal settlements. A total of 60 upgrading plans were developed for implementation in the short to medium term.

A total of eight informal settlements are targeted for formalisation in the township establishment stage this financial year, with 19 informal settlements targeted for the 2021/22 financial year, and a total of 52 in the next three years. These will form part of the City's pipeline of projects included for full upgrading, which involves providing formal services. The following eight areas are targeted for formalisation in the current financial year:

- Ga-Rankuwa Unit 15
- Klerksoord Ext 32
- Mabopane Ext 11
- Nellmapius Ext 22, Stands 12223 and 12224
- Pienaarspoort Ext 20
- Pienaarspoort Ext 21
- Soshanguve Block T, Stand 1266
- Stinkwater Ext 10

The areas targeted for formalisation in the next three years will see 72 880 households provided with formal and permanent stands.

The Utility Services Department is also installing bulk and internal water and sewer services to support our human settlement developments. The following key projects are of note:

- Rama City Mega Project: Construction of bulk water and sewers, and a water and sewer reticulation network for 1 660 stands
- Nellmapius Willows Mega Project: Construction of a water and sewer reticulation network to support Phase 1 of 200 housing units

- Hammanskraal West Ext 10: Construction of bulk water and sewers, as well as a reticulation network to support 2 776 households as part of the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme
- Nellmapius Ext 2: Construction of a sewer network as part of the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Partnership Grant to about 358 stands
- Phomolong (Mamelodi Ext 6): Construction of water and sewer reticulation services to 1 051 stands
- Mabopane Ext 12: Construction of a water and sewer network to benefit 538 families

These are endeavours by the City to effectively extend services to these areas. These projects will provide a significant improvement in the living standards of these communities. The projects will enhance safety and improve access to basic services in recognition of how important it is to uphold the dignity of those living in informal areas.

Basic service delivery

Madam Speaker, we also need to continuously maintain and safeguard our existing infrastructure.

When we took office in November 2020, we inherited a situation where basic front line service delivery had suffered under the period when the City was under administration – grass was uncut, potholes were not fixed, street lights were out, and water leaks took weeks to repair.

This became a focused priority for us to address and return core service delivery to Tshwane. Through our weekly service delivery war room we make sure that the very basics are on track.

To date, and in over five months, we have cut over 35 million square metres of grass. The road repair teams have repaired over 7 000 potholes across 25 000 square meters of road, a massive area altogether.

In spite of the regular rains, more than 70 000 street lights have been repaired and our teams have been working to increase their response times to electricity failures.

We are well on our way to restoring the lights across Tshwane and we are working on improving the reliability of the electricity supply by eliminating the causes of repetitive failures.

Our water and sewerage teams have also been working hard to look after our aging infrastructure. To date, over 11 000 sewers have been unblocked and over 20 000 water leaks have been repaired.

I am proud to say that the Regional Operations and Coordination Department is working diligently to advance efficiencies that would result in quicker repair times. There is still much that must be done but our focus on front line service delivery will remain persistent.

I know that the residents of Tshwane have noticed the difference this administration has made in the short time we have been in office.

Financial stability

Madam Speaker, the restoration of the City's financial health remains a top priority.

Before COVID-19, South Africa was already in a technical recession. The impact of the pandemic and the enforcement of lockdown measures since March 2020 have significantly worsened the situation.

The impact of these measures was immediately felt by the City with a significant drop in revenue. In the last financial year, the budget estimation for the collection rate was 95%, With the COVID-19 impact it dropped to less than 75% for the 2019/20 financial year.

Following the reinstatement of Council at the end of October 2020, we immediately began to interrogate the reasons for the poor financial performance in the 2019/20 financial year, which resulted in a deficit on the operating account of over R4 billion.

This precarious position meant that the City had less than a month's cash to cover its commitments.

The mere fact that the City could continue to honour its commitments to employees and creditors, such as Eskom and Rand Water, can directly be attributed to the concerted efforts of the DA-led government to improve the financial health of the City since 2016.

Now we have to do it all again after inheriting a R4 billion deficit.

The long-term Financial Sustainability Plan, adopted by Council during 2018, has been critically reviewed to refocus on short-term interventions to ensure a return to financial health as quickly as possible. Matters under review include the following:

- Reduce non-essential expenditure
- Enhance revenue and debt collection
- Implement virtual community outreach programmes to assist residents with their accounts, as well as affordability arrangements to address arrears debt and the registration of qualifying indigents
- Improve the internal control environment
- Ensure consequence management through the Financial Disciplinary Board
- Review contracts

At an operational level, critical interventions focussing on revenue enhancement have already been implemented to address the poor meter reading performance, the backlog in finalising clearance certificates and the collection of arrears debt.

The collection rate for debtors has already improved to just over 88% and every effort is being made to again reach the target of 95%.

These interventions, with a critical review of current expenditure, will pave the way for the City's return to financial health and sustainability, and will slowly begin to rebuild the trust between the City and Tshwane residents.

Driving economic growth and employment

Madam Speaker, through visionary thinking, forward planning, disruptive innovation and building centres of excellence, I believe we can leverage Tshwane as a catalyst to drive economic growth. We have, in fact, already done this through a number of key initiatives.

This Council recently approved the Internal Municipal Services District Policy and By-Law, which now brings the City in line with international best practice with regard to partnerships between the government, property owners and communities in the management and maintenance of strategic precincts across Tshwane.

The inner city continues to be the window through which the international community views our country. We are pleased to announce that we have had advanced discussions with the South African Reserve Bank to support and fast-track its current precinct upgrade, which is estimated to amount to over R1 billion.

In addition, we are currently processing 17 Strategic Urban Development Projects, which will be a major boost to Tshwane's economy, as well as a direct contributor to the municipal revenue base.

We have now finalised the land use planning and commenced with the provision of bulk infrastructure to support the multi-billion-rand Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone.

These initiatives will ensure that the City has a sustainable infrastructure-led economic recovery and growth plan. Coupled to this is our effort to strengthen the manufacturing value chain by supporting the growth and development of Tier 2 and 3 suppliers.

Council has now published precinct plans for e-public participation for Hatfield and the Pretoria West area where the Tshwane Fresh Produce Market is located. These plans will provide further impetus for development in these locations, strengthening the existing upstream and downstream value chains that exist in these areas, which include mix-used development and residential densification.

We know that the tourism industry globally has been one of the worst-hit sectors following the COVID-19 pandemic. Ironically, this sector has the highest potential for job creation. As such, the industry will be expected to play a leading role in our economic recovery plans. Investment in new product offerings are critical to ensure that we repurpose and reposition tourism in Tshwane as a leading sector.

Among the interventions are reviving the Cullinan Diamond Mine Museum, rebranding the unique township tourism offerings across Tshwane, as well as implementing the Lalela Project on Church Square.

This will represent a symbolic reflection of our country's transition with the installation of a set of Nelson Mandela's footprints, which were donated to the City by the former president, and the construction of a free-speech amphitheatre.

The COVID-19 pandemic has inadvertently propelled us into the workplace of the future. Increasingly, the notion of an office-based workforce is becoming obsolete. The City needs to lead the charge in this regard. As such, we have commenced the review of the Tshwane Land Use Management and Zoning Classification Scheme to *inter alia* ensure a more receptive environment for home-based small business operations.

One of the most enduring ways to keep the City sustainable and financially viable is to grow the City's rates base as a primary source of income. As such, Group Property is preparing a basket of strategic land parcels for disposal through long-term lease agreements, based on a best-value-for-money proposition.

This includes the historic Pretoria Show Grounds property that has now been returned to the ownership of the City. Furthermore, Group Property has appointed a property contract management agency to lease out our business property portfolio to optimise revenue enhancement and management.

They are also working with the Human Settlements Department and will release a basket of land parcels to facilitate a range of mixed typology housing delivery options, including gap, low-cost and social housing.

Once developed, these land parcels and properties will generate new revenue in perpetuity for the City.

We are also driving job creation through the Expanded Public Works Programme. Since initiating our lottery system, which we introduced upon assuming office in 2016, we have employed approximately 66 205 individuals.

This has made a significant impact on the lives of multiple families across Tshwane. Our lottery system has introduced fairness as we have rotated various people through the system and created numerous different opportunities for residents.

We must also give thought to how we leverage our public transport infrastructure and facilities in how we grow and expand the city. Public transport is a key enabling factor of economic growth, and creates an accessible and mobile city.

The City of Tshwane has the objective of developing an Integrated Transport System that meets the needs of all the people of Tshwane in a sustainable and affordable manner. But we must be strategic in the manner in which we do this.

We are extending A Re Yeng operations to enable better access to public transportation across the city. We anticipate the launch and operation of Line 2B (CBD to Menlyn) by the end of May 2021. We will also finalise the signing of the 12-year fee per kilometre negotiated contract with the Bus Operating Company before November 2021.

The construction of the Wonderboom Intermodal Facility with four bus rapid transit stations is another critical economic growth enabler.

This facility will provide an integrated transport service with different modes of transport: Commuter rail by Prasa at Wonderboom Station, a minibus taxi facility, and a park-and-ride facility integrating with A Re Yeng facilities. Construction will be concluded by December 2021.

We must also leverage our strategic assets.

When I took office in November 2020, I made it clear that executive oversight of Wonderboom National Airport is to be affirmed and that airport operations are to be stabilised. Indeed, Wonderboom National Airport is in the mayoral ten-point intervention plan as a focused priority.

To this end we entered into a memorandum of understanding with Airports Company South Africa as a strategic partner to assist us. Through collaboration with Airports Company South Africa, we will advance and improve operations at the airport to globally acceptable aviation standards.

This initiative was undertaken to ensure that Wonderboom National Airport unlocks its full economic potential as a strategic asset.

Supporting the vulnerable

Madam Speaker, we must also always prioritise and support the vulnerable in our city. This last year has created significant financial hardships for many South Africans, causing immense mental and emotional distress. We must offer ways to support those who require social support and relief.

To support the vulnerable, the Health Department has continued with its implementation of the substance abuse response programme during the 2020/21 financial year with the main focus of implementing the Community Oriented Substance Use Programme in partnership with the University of Pretoria.

The partnership with the University of Pretoria enhances the ability of the City of Tshwane to develop and implement evidence-based interventions to address the scourge of substance abuse.

The helpline that we established upon taking office in 2016 continues to support vulnerable communities. The performance of the contact centre has been remarkable as reflected by 100% of cases being attended to within 48 hours of calling the centre against the target of 80%.

Access to drug and substance abuse services is central to the prevention and treatment of this social ill and its associated impact on society. We currently have 17 functional Community Oriented Substance Use Programme sites which have assisted 9 784 beneficiaries.

Opioid substitution therapy offers people who are opioid dependent an alternative in prescribed medicine that is aimed at reducing harm to themselves, their families and society at large while improving their social functionality.

We currently have 2 112 beneficiaries who have access to these programmes and I am pleased to note that we have a 63% retention rate, which is well above the international standard of 50%.

This is very encouraging as people are accessing these programmes and staying true to their commitment to get better by staying involved.

The Health Department has also established and supported Regional Drug Action Committees as a build-up mechanism towards the establishment of the Local Drug Action Committee.

These structures are meant to play a coordinating and oversight role of programmes at community level. In the current financial year, the City will make R2 million available as grants to deserving non-profit organisations to conduct demand- and harm-reduction initiatives in communities.

Going into the 2021/22 financial year, the Health Department will continue with the implementation of the evidence-based substance abuse response programme as reflected in the National Drug Master Plan.

Homelessness remains a core area of the city that requires intervention. In the next five years, the City, in partnership with the University of Pretoria Pathways Operations Centre and non-governmental organisations, will execute the ten-point action plan and institutionalise the homeless task team aligned to the Tshwane Street Homeless Policy approved by Council in 2019.

The policy alludes to the fact that there is a need to establish temporary transit shelters in all the regions of Tshwane with the support of City departments and various stakeholders.

With the creation of a dedicated directorate for homelessness, we have also had more targeted interventions in the space, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic when we assisted over 6 700 members of the homeless community.

Further to this we have prioritised support to Tshwane residents with disabilities. We have allocated R1 million to this effect. Just yesterday we awarded 45 bursaries to students with disabilities.

Part of social upliftment also includes providing people with dignity through the distribution of title deeds.

I am pleased to note that as of the end of Quarter 3 of the 2020/21 financial year, the City has issued 83,36% of the title deeds received from the Gauteng provincial government.

As soon as we returned to office, we prioritised accelerating the distribution of title deeds. We have already held five title deeds issuing events, which contributed to 603 title deeds being issued during Quarter 2 of 2020/21.

We must provide a basket of services to the vulnerable in Tshwane and this is what we have prioritised in these various initiatives.

This is why we are supporting substance abuse issues, directing interventions to combat the spread of HIV, assisting the homeless, distributing bursaries and providing dignity through the distribution of title deeds. This is how you assist the vulnerable.

Creating a safe and caring city

Madam Speaker, the creation of a safe and caring city is critical if we are to attract investment and businesses to Tshwane. To do this requires that we properly capacitate our departments so that we can enforce our by-laws and respond appropriately when tragedy strikes in the city.

Over the last five years we have made significant investment in capacitating our Emergency Services Department.

The Emergency Services Department has procured 94 vehicles through the vehicle replacement programme. This includes a number of highly specialised vehicles, with some being among the first of their kind in the country. These include the following:

- Two specialised hazardous material and incident command vehicles
- Two specialised ambulances, including a special infectious diseases unit and intensive care unit
- An aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicle for Wonderboom National Airport
- Two armoured vehicles, including a fire engine and an ambulance
- 34 ambulances
- A multi-patient transporter
- 14 fire engines
- 16 rapid intervention vehicles with the capacity to do rescues, and attend to vehicle and smaller fires
- A rope rescue vehicle
- A swift water rescue vehicle
- Four double cab bushfire vehicles
- Nine response vehicles
- Six utility vehicles

Our Emergency Services Department is at the forefront of responding to disasters and tragedies in the city. Whether they arise from flooding, fires, adverse weather conditions or car accidents, our teams respond rapidly to ensure that our residents receive the support they need.

I am also pleased to note that the progress with regard to the completion of the Mamelodi Fire Station is on track, and I look forward to unveiling the project towards the end of this

financial year. Once completed, this fire station will provide significant support to the residents in the surrounding areas.

The Tshwane Metro Police Department is also at the forefront of helping to keep our residents safe through by-law enforcement, traffic policing and crime prevention.

When we returned to the City a key priority of mine has been to secure and safeguard the inner city.

I am excited to announce that in the space of a few short months, we will launch the first dedicated Inner City Policing Unit in a major metropolitan city in the country.

We have secured a site for a satellite Tshwane Metro Police Department station, which will be based in the inner city and be supported by 100 Tshwane Metro Police Department officers.

This is a massive achievement and progressive step for our city when it comes to active crime prevention.

Social and health infrastructure

Madam Speaker, as we care for our residents we also need to ensure that we develop infrastructure that supports their needs holistically.

In 2018, the City commenced with the upgrade of Pilditch Stadium. The last phase of the upgrade was the replacement of the synthetic track which had already exceeded its 20-year life span. The track was upgraded to comply with the standards of World Athletics (formerly the IAAF) and is now ready to host international athletics meetings to position Tshwane as a sports tourism destination.

The City has now overcome the challenges delaying the upgrading of Refilwe Stadium since the inception of the project, which included a high level of community unrest and changes in the consulting team. The contractors are now on-site and the project is going ahead as planned, and will be completed in 2023.

I am also pleased to note that the upgrading of Caledonian Stadium will begin this year. We have moved ahead with our plans and I very recently had the opportunity to visit and officially open construction with a sod-turning ceremony.

I was joined by members of the Arcadia Shepherds Football Club who are eager to see the stadium returned to its former glory.

We have also expanded our healthcare clinics.

Rayton Clinic was completed and operationalised last year as we delivered on the promises that we made to these residents.

The long-awaited construction of New Lusaka Clinic was also launched in 2021 to respond to the needs of the Mamelodi community where facilities in that area are experiencing overcrowding due to population growth.

The facility is expected to be completed in the 2022/23 financial year. We are tracking this project carefully to make sure it runs on schedule.

We will continuously work towards expanding our social and health infrastructure to our communities to cater for all of their needs comprehensively.

Fast-tracking development and technology

Madam Speaker, the use of technology to drive efficient processes in the City is a crucial deliverable.

This is why the City will soon launch the first phase of automating city planning functions.

We are conscious of how processes relating to land development applications are mainly manual, requiring customers to visit walk-in centres to submit and get feedback on applications.

Sometimes a customer has to visit a walk-in centre at least three times to finalise the submission of an application, with various activities performed at different counters and sometimes at different buildings.

In this regard, several land development application forms have been identified for automation on the e-Tshwane platform, which include rezoning applications, removal applications, amendment or suspension of title conditions, building applications and township establishment applications.

The automation of these processes will provide a new channel for customers to engage with the City while streamlining and optimising applications and approval processes.

Furthermore, the automation will also enable data analytics to be performed with the view to further optimise the process by identifying any further inefficiencies and ensure the easy retrieval of applications and general tracking.

The City also continues to expand its Wi-Fi programme, popularly known as TshWi-Fi. In the current term, 665 new free TshWi-Fi zone sites have been installed and another 20 are planned to be implemented in Quarter 4.

This programme continues to contribute to ensuring that there is connectedness among residents and enhanced access to digital services. We would like to remind our residents that the current administration decided to increase the daily quota to 1GB of data per device per day and to provide uncapped access to research and educational sites.

There has been significant uptake of these services across Tshwane.

The number of connected devices per month is over 184 000 for which the data would have cost in the region of R27 million for all networks.

However, I must appeal to our communities to continue to be guardians of this critical infrastructure by calling out and reporting any acts of vandalism which affect the availability of services.

Keeping our city clean

Madam Speaker, we must safeguard our natural environment. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we protect our surroundings and maintain a clean living and working environment.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, has at its core the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to improve the quality of life of all people, while tackling climate change, and protecting and preserving our environment.

It is also why I reintroduced the Tswelopele Clean-up Campaign which seeks to ensure that we spend time in different communities around the city by joining activists and residents in cleaning up areas where illegal dumping or littering is prevalent.

Our Environmental Management and Parks Division plays a critical role to ensure that the City complies with all the necessary laws and regulations to prevent any environmental degradation.

However, pollution of the City's public parks and open spaces has been a major concern. This is why we have introduced the innovative Adopt-a-Spot initiative, which will give the public the opportunity to adopt public open spaces for cleaning and beautification.

The policy was adopted at the end of January 2021, and residents and business owners will now have the opportunity to join hands with the City to beautify our parks and public open spaces, providing clean and safe spaces for families to enjoy.

Preventing environmental degradation is a collective effort, and all of us have a part to play. This is why when we came into office in November 2020, we declared war on the scourge of illegal dumping across Tshwane. To date we have cleaned and cleared close to 4 000 illegal dumping sites.

We have also identified 671 hotspots where illegal dumping takes place on an almost daily basis. And here we need the eyes and ears of our residents to report illegal dumpers to the Tshwane Metro Police Department so that they can issue fines to offenders.

To support these efforts, the Waste Management Services Division established a clear framework of cooperation with the Tshwane Metro Police Department for the reporting of illegal dumping and the enforcement of the Waste Management By-Law.

The Chief of Police has also issued a directive to all Tshwane Metro Police Department officers to enforce these by-laws without fear or favour, while City officials obtained an approved fine schedule from the Pretoria Magistrates' Court.

It is important to note that if any municipality wants to manage its waste in a sustainable way, it needs a comprehensive plan that addresses every aspect of the waste management value chain.

This is why I gave instruction to the Waste Management Services Division to finalise the City's Integrated Waste Management Plan, which includes the following:

- Acquiring additional landfill space (which is already at an advanced stage)
- Revising the operational management of landfill and garden refuse transfer sites (which is almost complete)
- Implementing a separation-at-source campaign
- Promoting a recycling policy which shows how communities should recycle
- Incorporating the informal sector, such as waste pickers, into the waste management stream
- Identifying a site and capital budget request to establish a Material Recycling Facility

I am happy to announce that the first draft of the plan is already in circulation among City departments for comments and, once approved by Council, will set the City on a more sustainable waste management course.

COVID-19 management

Madam Speaker, during the last year we have had to confront how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of our residents and the operations of this institution.

Our cross-departmental teams, under the leadership of the acting Chief of Emergency Services and with support from our Health Department, have been critically involved in leading our COVID-19 response.

I want to acknowledge all of our frontline workers in the City who played and continue to play a crucial role in combatting the spread of COVID-19, often putting their lives on the line.

I was very proud to learn that out of the 24 City of Tshwane clinics that were assessed, all of them achieved Ideal Clinic status in various categories of the Ideal Clinic rating system.

The City is honoured to note that 20 clinics achieved platinum status and four achieved gold status. This is an indication of the highest possible quality of services our residents get from City-run clinics.

Our teams continuously work towards ensuring that waiting times at clinics are improved. The national norm for clinic waiting time is 180 minutes. The City of Tshwane has impressively decreased its clinic waiting times to 130 minutes and 126 minutes in Quarter 1 and 2 of this financial year respectively.

The health teams also did extensive work on our COVID-19 outreach programmes, where we had direct contact with over 1,7 million residents and administered over 194 000 tests.

The City of Tshwane is committed to the COVID-19 vaccination programme as demonstrated by our site readiness in terms of personnel, equipment and infrastructure.

Working with the provincial government, the Tshwane district commenced with Phase 1 implementation, which so far has seen 13 664 frontline staff vaccinated as per the national Electronic Vaccination Data System.

We are working with national and provincial government departments to ensure that we successfully plan and execute all phases of the vaccination programme.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker, so do I return to the original points that I raised in my introduction. I have sought to lay down where we have come from in the last year to what the future journey for the City of Tshwane looks like.

What lies before us now is an immense challenge, because we must return hope to the residents of our city.

We must rebuild a relationship of trust with our residents. There is only one way to do this and that is through ensuring that quality and sustainable services are delivered to them.

We will then create a conducive business environment and a responsive government.

We do not have a set date for elections this year, but regardless of when the election date is set, we must prioritise the stability of this city.

We all have our part to play in this strategy as councillors of this chamber and public representatives.

Thank you for joining me today and I look forward to the journey that we will have together as we take Tshwane into the future.