

## AMBITIOUS PROJECT TO REVITALISE INNER CITY PRECINCT



**eThekweni City Manager Musa Mbhele with the Metro Police and ambassadors from Ensure Ubuntu who have been contracted to beef up safety, security, and cleanliness in the inner city as part of the Inner City Rejuvenation Programme.**

**P**lans to rejuvenate the inner city are moving swiftly along and making a tangible difference. This comes as the City has increased capacity to achieve its ambitious plan to rejuvenate the inner city precinct and deliver a safer, cleaner, and greener Durban.

The programme encompasses a comprehensive range of services designed to revitalise the heart of the City. It includes the deployment of professional security teams, armed patrol units, and rapid-response squads.

Complementing these efforts is a team of dedicated street

ambassadors that will be introduced to monitor and maintain cleanliness in designated areas, while also acting as community liaisons by reporting suspicious activities directly to a local command centre.

This landmark initiative marks a significant step forward in enhancing the quality of life of residents, businesses, and visitors alike while boosting the local economy through the creation of over 100 new jobs.

“This project is a game-changer for eThekweni. By combining enhanced security measures with proactive facilities management, we are

not only addressing immediate safety and cleanliness concerns but also laying the foundation for a vibrant and sustainable inner city precinct that residents can take pride in,” said eThekweni City Manager Musa Mbhele.

The initiative aligns with the City's broader vision to regenerate urban spaces, stimulate economic growth, and improve public safety. With over 100 jobs created through this contract, the project represents a significant investment in the local workforce, empowering communities and fostering economic resilience.

The introduction of street ambassadors will bring a visible and welcoming presence to the streets of Durban.

Meanwhile, the enhanced security measures, including armed patrols and a coordinated command centre, will provide peace of mind to residents and businesses operating in the area.

eThekweni Municipality is committed to working closely with its partners to ensure the successful implementation of this project, which is expected to serve as a model for urban renewal efforts across the region.

## NEW CORNUBIA RETAIL FACILITY EMPOWERS SMMES



Informal traders' businesses in the north are set to undergo a positive transformation as they celebrate a new informal traders' facility at Cornubia Retail. The facility provides 24 secure stalls for local entrepreneurs, fostering economic growth and inclusivity.

THE new informal traders' facility at Cornubia Retail is a significant step forward in creating sustainable opportunities for small, medium, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs). The facility, which includes 24 stalls, aims to provide a more organised and secure space for entrepreneurs.

With 15 SMMEs already allocated stalls, this initiative highlights the Municipality's commitment to supporting the informal economy, which plays a crucial role in job creation and poverty alleviation in South Africa.

The facility supports broader sustainable development goals by fostering economic growth, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability.

Among the beneficiaries is Mlungisi Maphumulo, who

runs a health and beauty products business. "Having my own space in a structured environment will elevate my business to another level," Maphumulo said.

Another beneficiary Dumisane Hlongwane, is a fast-food vendor who sells traditional food.

"I'm over the moon about having my own space. I sell from a nearby taxi rank with no shelter, which limits my growth, especially on rainy days. Now, with electricity and a secure location, I can expand my business."

Chairperson of the Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli emphasised the facility's role in promoting economic development and supporting local SMMEs.

## SMME HELPDESK FUELING GROWTH AND EMPOWERING LOCAL BUSINESSES

ETHEKWINI Municipality's SMME Helpdesk, established at the height of COVID-19 in 2021, continues to grow from strength to strength. It continues to fulfil its mandate of fast-tracking payments to support business growth and much more.

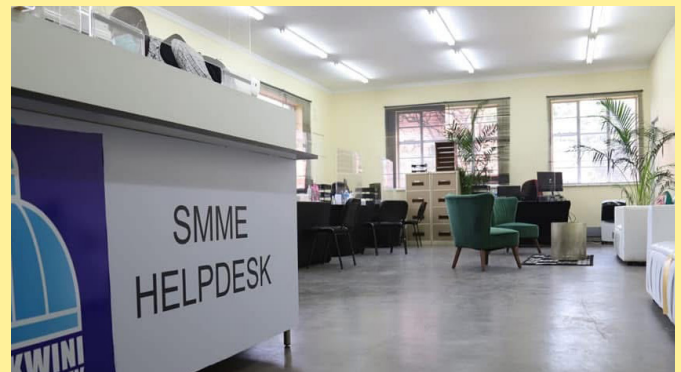
Originally created to address payment delays for small, medium, and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) doing business with the City, the Helpdesk has evolved into a one-stop-shop for essential business information and support.

In addition to resolving payment issues, the Helpdesk now offers guidance on how to become a supplier for the Municipality, including details on the Supplier Self Service (SSS) system and registration processes. According to the office database, one of the

most significant successes of the Helpdesk is its ability to assist SMMEs with invoice payments.

In March, the office successfully managed 21 cases, with 14 resolved and seven still in progress. The total value of invoices handled was approximately R1.9 million with R599 884.79 already committed for payment in April.

Programme Manager from eThekweni Municipality's Business Support, Tourism, Markets and Agri-Business Unit, Welcome Maduna emphasised the importance of the Helpdesk's continued progress for the benefit of SMMEs. "This structure is crucial in ensuring the sustainability of small businesses, particularly by facilitating timely payments to suppliers. The SMME



The SMME Helpdesk is a vital hub supporting small businesses with payment processing, supplier guidance, funding opportunities, and more to foster local economic growth.

Helpdesk is a vital mechanism contributing to the economic growth and success of local businesses."

Businesses are encouraged to make use of this office, which is dedicated to bringing services closer to them.

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# PORT OF DURBAN DEVELOPMENT TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMY

THE Port of Durban development workshop hosted by the City's Economic Development and Planning Unit on 1 April was hailed a success.

The workshop shared updates on the development of the Port of Durban and provided an overview of the City and of the Port's initiatives to promote economic growth.

The Port of Durban is a major economic hub that attracts foreign investment and produces profitable operations that increase the City's GDP. Through a public-private cooperation, its development will also boost global competitiveness, job creation, and regional prosperity.

The Durban Container Terminals (DCT), responsible



**Chairperson of the Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli thanked stakeholders for a fruitful public-private partnership engagement for the Port of Durban development workshop.**

for 60 percent of South Africa's container traffic, has increased efficiency by adding nine Rubber-Tyred Gantries (RTG's) and 20 straddle carriers. Transnet, the port operator, has allocated R3.4

billion in 2025 to improve the equipment and operating efficiency of its container ports, primarily focusing on Durban's busiest cargo ports.

"These developments are expected to enhance the City's

economy and demonstrate a strong public-private partnership, ensuring a functional port infrastructure system," said Transnet Durban Port Manager Nkumbuzi Ben Mazwi.

"The development is also implementing a turnaround by investing in hybrid RTGs, which uses less fuel and are like electric vehicles, to handle vessels more efficiently and reduce delays," added Mazwi.

The Port is responsible for goods transported on the current road/rail split in terms of cargo moved within Durban.

Most of the freight is transported via the Durban-Gauteng corridor, Northern N2 corridor, and Southern N2 corridor.

## INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO OPTIMISE BUSINESS PROCESSES

THROUGH the Economic Development and Planning Unit, the City has partnered with the World Bank Group to present and table strategies for continued City business process reforms.

A workshop was recently hosted at the Durban Edge headquarters, to present

the City Business Process Optimisation Programme (City BPOP) approach.

This provided a platform for joint discussions on the selection of appropriate indicators for the City BPOP.

"The City recently adopted the Draft Budget. The Municipality is on a journey

of turning the corner through turnaround strategies," said Shunnon Tulsiram, Head of the Economic Development and Planning Unit.

"These opportunities are perfectly in line with the objectives of the City's turnaround strategy," added Tulsiram.

This programme will support the reforms in customer-facing City business process improvements.

It will do this by adapting and expanding the Sub-National Doing Business and enhancing customer-interfacing business processes.

## City launches Khuluma Nathi Chatbot

ETHEKWINI Municipality is calling on residents to register on the new e-participation chatbot on Whatsapp, Khuluma Nathi/Let's Engage, to easily engage on the City's Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Council approved the draft IDP be released for public consultation on 31 March. This strategic document is open for public comment together with the

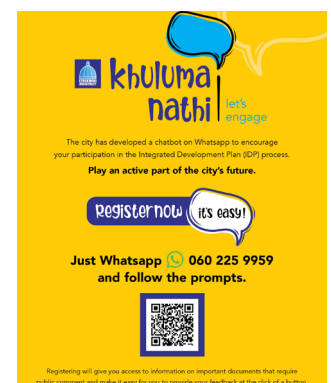
draft budget.

The Khuluma Nathi/Let's Engage platform includes information on the IDP, details the different plans and priorities, and annexures. It allows the public to choose the plan they wish to comment on and the language they wish to engage in. The chatbot allows for English and Isizulu to cater to residents in the region.

Bongumusa Zondo, Chief Strategy Officer, said the chatbot is part of local government's aim to enhance participatory governance through digital transformation.

Register to receive updates, information and comment on the IDP on 060 225 9959.

The platform is solely for engagement on the IDP and not for other complaints and enquiries.



# NAFCOC CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

KNOWN as the largest chamber of commerce on the African continent and the brainchild of Black Economic Empowerment, the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC) celebrated its 60th anniversary at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre.

Speaking at the diamond jubilee celebrations on 4 April, Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Thami Ntuli praised NAFCOC for being trail blazers in uniting black businesses in the country.

“Government is committed to enhancing partnerships with the private sector. We are committed to working with national government to create employment opportunities. Our path going forward is guided by a clear road map that focuses on rebuilding the economy through strategic investments focusing on key

sectors,” said the Premier.

The event was also graced by the National Minister of Small Business Development Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams who confirmed: “As we celebrate this Diamond Jubilee, we reflect on the resilience and impact of black businesses. Government is unequivocal about their vital role.”

eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba said NAFCOC embodies the resilience and tenacity of its founding fathers, who, despite the oppressive and brutal system of the past, triumphed against all odds. “We have no doubt that the current leadership will continue the legacy of these giants by playing a pivotal role in developing and growing black business,” said Mayor Xaba.

President of NAFCOC Gilbert Mosena said the organisation is extremely grateful to eThekweni Municipality



From left, eThekweni Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba, National Minister of Small Business Development Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, KwaZulu-Natal Premier Thami Ntuli, and President of the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry Gilbert Mosena at the organisations 60th celebration.

under the Invest Durban Unit umbrella who responded to his call for action to forge unity with the chamber.

“Together we can create an environment where black-owned business can flourish and become the producer of goods and not just

consumers.”

Russell Curtis of Invest Durban said: “The hope is that together we can do more to build a more united business movement, and mutually prosperous nation, for the benefit of all.”

## 2025 DFF MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME GETS UNDERWAY

THE Durban Fashion Fair (DFF) mentorship programme for the Class of 2025 officially kicked off on 4 April, marking the beginning of an exciting 10-month journey. This year’s group consists of 25 talented emerging designers, each selected to receive guidance and training to elevate their skills in the competitive fashion industry. The mentorship, under the umbrella of eThekweni Municipality’s Fashion Development Programme, offers an extensive curriculum aimed at developing the mentees’ technical and creative expertise, incorporating both theory and practical experience.

Fezile Mdletshe, founder of Fezile Fashion Skills Academy, who facilitates training of the group, highlighted the new components introduced

this year to ensure top-notch, household fashion designers continue to emerge from the programme. Mdletshe said the focus will be on patternmaking and garment construction, textile classes, and creative direction. “Mentees will also be required to create both fashion and business portfolios, which are crucial tools for their career advancement. Additionally, business planning and proposal writing sessions will provide trainees with essential skills for establishing and sustaining fashion businesses.”

This year’s programme is centered on building sustainable careers in fashion, fostering entrepreneurial success, and preparing mentees for the realities of the industry. By the end of the programme, the mentees will have the



Twenty-five mentees have embarked on their journey of training in the fashion industry, with the goal of becoming industry experts.

opportunity to showcase their garments at the annual DFF showcase, providing them with access to important industry markets and a platform for visibility.

Kwanele Mthiyane, a participant in the programme, shared his excitement: “I am thrilled to be part of the DFF mentorship programme which

will allow me to improve my skills.”

Chairperson of the Economic Development and Planning Committee Councillor Thembo Ntuli emphasised the importance of nurturing local talent. “Supporting the local fashion industry is essential for driving job creation and contributing to economic growth.”

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