

2024 *State*
of the **CITY** **Address**

Executive Mayor
Cllr, Makoro Mosema John Mpe

Reaga
Polokwane

THE 2024 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS (SOCA) BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF POLOKWANE, HIS WORSHIP CLLR MOSEMA MAKORO JOHN MPE, ON 30 APRIL 2024 AT JACK BOTES HALL, POLOKWANE

Madam Speaker, Cllr Wilhelmina Modiba;

Whip of Council, Cllr Adolph Rapetswa;

The Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo and all Mayors of our local municipalities;

The representatives of the Zion Christian Church, as well as the St. Engenas Zion Christian Church;

The leadership of the South African Council of Churches;

Beng Mabu, Maaparankwe Bahlomphegi e lego Magoshi a rena;

Fellow Councillors;

The Leadership of our glorious movement, the ANC and its Alliance partners;

The leadership of all political parties represented in the Council;

Municipal Manager, Ms. Thuso Nemugumoni, and your management team;

Representatives of various government departments and entities;

The Leadership of organised labour, SAMWU and IMATU;

Representatives of vulnerable groupings – youth, women, elderly and people living with different disabilities;

Members of the taxi industry led by SANTACO Provincial Chairperson, Mr Frans Ngwepe, as well the various taxi associations here present;

Representatives of the Vehicle Operating Company (VOC), Esilux (Pty) Ltd led by the Board Chairperson, Mr. Moshita Lekganyane;

Members of the Business Community;

Members of the sporting fraternity;

Members of the academia;

Members of the media;

Members of the entertainment industry, including stars such as King Monada, Janisto, CK, Dinaka tsa Mankgaile le Dikgwari tsa Moletjie;

Our cultural performance groups;

The Mpe, Sefara and Molepo families, as well as all my relatives that are here; May I ask that you all stand up for recognition;

Fellow residents of Polokwane who are present in this hall and listening from various media platforms;

Good morning to all of you! Thobela! Goeie more! Ndaa! Silotšhile! Sanibonani!

E reng ke le lotšheng ke re – Kgotso ya Modimo ga e be le lena!

INTRODUCTION

It is with a great sense of privilege that I stand before you this morning to give a report-back on the commitments we have made in the past years in improving and

transforming the lives of our residents and outline our plans for the journey that lies ahead.

We are congregated in these four halls today at the conclusion of the month of April – a month that reminds us that our freedom was never free.

On the 06th of April 1979, the young revolutionary soul of a freedom fighter, struggle activist and Umkhonto we Sizwe operative, **Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu**, was cut short by the merciless apartheid regime.

Before going to the gallows, Solomon Mahlangu, left with us with words that would inspire our struggle when he said, *“Tell my people that I love them and that they must continue the fight, my blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom, A luta continua”*.

Our country was again shattered on 10 April 1993 by the sad news of the coward assassination of a fierce opponent of the apartheid regime and the people’s hero – **Martin Thembisile Chris Hani**. The passing of Chris Hani has left a lasting wound on our nation and we continue to honour with pride his legacy of selfless struggle for freedom in our land.

This month also marks the anniversary of the passing of the longest serving president of the African National Congress and leader of the anti-apartheid struggle, **Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo**, who passed away on 24 April 1993, after successfully leading a relentless campaign against apartheid.

In borrowing from the poem by **Maya Angelou** when she said:

*Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.*

The generation of freedom fighters led by Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela refused to back down from pursuing a noble idea of a South Africa that is non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous.

Their fight also inspired other generations of freedom fighters including the youth of 1976 and the young people of the 1980s led by the likes of Ramoshoane Peter Mokaba who responded to the clarion call to render apartheid unworkable and ungovernable.



This past weekend on 27 April, our nation gathered to commemorate freedom day to mark 30 years since the attainment of the democratic breakthrough on our soil, reminding us that indeed our freedom was never free.

Thus, as we deliver this State of the City Address, we must also reflect on the progress that the ANC-led government has made to realize a better life for all whilst also acknowledging the challenges that remain.

Madam Speaker,

Prior to 1994, Polokwane was just a small apartheid town with one main central business district surrounded by the small townships of Seshego, Mankweng and Sebayeng as well as rural villages under traditional authorities.

Today, Polokwane is characterized by:

'It is a core city that acts as the primary hub of the area surrounded by the presence of developed business industries, multiple central business districts, Big human settlements such as Seshego, Mankweng and Bendor, reliable public transport such as Leeto la Polokwane, better and tarred roads extended to rural areas and sustained implementation of infrastructure development projects.'

As we speak today, Census 2023 reported that Polokwane is among 17 cities that account for 50% of the population in the country and carries the dream of all

Limpopo residents for the realization of the metro status – for us to become the first metropolitan municipality in the northern part of our country. Polokwane is also the most populous secondary City in the country after Emfuleni Municipality.

The Municipality has played a major role in changing the apartheid spatial pattern in the past 30 years of democracy which was mainly focused on the minority and excluding the majority of the people. In the process, the City has reviewed the Spatial Development Framework to promote inclusivity and break the spatial divide. For example, we developed the landmark Layton bridge, which broke the barriers of segregation between Westernburg and Nirvana as well as integrating Seshego with the main City centre.

We are now at advanced stages to expand our urban boundaries by integrating Mankweng through the R71 and Dalmada development corridor. We will develop a new suburb at Extension 178 to be named after General Ike Maphoto.

It is an apparent reality that 30 years on, Polokwane is indeed a better place to live than it was before 1994. In this City of Stars, we have a good story to tell – a story that encapsulates the lived experiences of **Tintswalo** as articulated by President Ramaphosa during the recent the State of the Nation Address. An acknowledgement that over the past 30 years we have achieved much together.



While we have changed Polokwane for the better, we need to do more to address the persisting challenges of unemployment, inequalities, poverty and provide reliable water, electricity and build better roads, sporting and recreation facilities.

In this regard, I wish to congratulate the African National Congress for the recent victory in the by-elections at Ward 10 and wish to introduce once again the newly elected ward councillor, a veteran in his own right, Cllr Willie Madikoto. May I request that he stand up.

This is a clear indication that whilst the people of Ward 10 have spoken, the people will speak in the whole country on the 29th of May this year.

The progress that we have made have seen us expand access to services that were once considered as luxury such as electricity. Today, we are happy that 95% of our people have access to electricity, 90.4% have access to some form of housing. And I want to congratulate the people of Limpopo for believing in building their own beautiful. Today, 72% of our people have access to water while in the past those who resided in rural villages had to go to rivers to access water

There has tangible progress that has been achieved, though we acknowledge the backlogs, especially with regard to sanitation and waste management. We are

diligently addressing these backlogs and are here to report back on the progress we have made.

BUILDING INTERNAL CAPACITY TOWARDS THE REALIZATION OF THE METRO VISION

Madam Speaker, our vision to build a better City of Stars will remain pipe dream if we lack the right internal capacity to execute our plans.

Hence, we have emphasized the need to put the right systems in place to improve the efficiency of the Municipality and hire the right people for the right jobs to ensure that we have requisite skills in the administration. We have said that organizations are defined by systems and borrowed from the words of **Edwards Deming** when he said, *“a bad system will beat a good person anytime”*.

The need to put in place the right systems cannot be divorced from instilling the right institutional culture. This requires a change in the attitude of our employees.

It was **Simon Sinek** who said, *“customers will never love a company until employees love it first”*. Our residents love their Municipality but require employees who love it more. Employees that protect the assets of the Municipality and serve the people with a smile in adherence to the principles of batho pele. Polokwane is on the right

track to ensure that employees are accountable. We want to appreciate employees who have heeded to the call of professionalization of our institution.

In order to ensure efficiency, we are implementing a performance management system for every employee in the Municipality.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Madam Speaker,

In order to improve the efficiency of our governance system, we are finally implementing the Separation of Powers Governance Model. We have established the Legislative Arm of Council comprising of new Portfolio Committees chaired by non-executive Councillors. These Committees play oversight on the work of the Members of the Mayoral Committee and the Administration, thereby promoting accountability and efficiency. The Committees also promote public participation in the affairs of the Municipality and spearhead our legislative function.

Good governance dictates that we, as Council and councillors, comply with all the laws that govern us and our sector. As Councillors, we have both legal and moral obligation to ensure that our communities are informed of, and actively participate in the affairs of the Municipality.

Every Ward Councillor is enjoined to report back to their communities on the affairs of the Municipality at least once every three months. Council took a decision on the 30th of January 2024 to monitor compliance in this regard. The Office of the Speaker is tasked to coordinate these community feedback meetings and report to Council on a quarterly basis, and the first report served in yesterday's Council.

We are also pleased that our Rules and Ethics Committee is on track to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct for Councillors all round. The Committee has generated basic policies and procedures to ensure fair and consistent enforcement of the Code. In the same breath the Committee has reviewed the Council Rules of Order to promote efficiency and effectiveness of the proceedings of Council and its Committees.

Section 17 of the Municipal Systems Act enjoins municipalities to put in place systems for communities to participate in the decision-making process.

The declaration of the Freedom Charter that *'the people shall govern'* has always been our guiding torch as the governing party from the years of the liberation struggle to the advent of democracy.

Ours is a people-centred developmental local government where the centrality of the role played by our communities holds a significant role.

For the past few weeks, the Municipality ran process of soliciting the wisdom of our residents into the 2024/25 Draft IDP and Budget. We are dearly thankful to the thousands of our residents who heeded the call to attend our IDP and Budget public participation process as well as those who followed us on social media.

It remains our greatest gratitude to the residents of Polokwane for trusting and believing in us to steer and drive this Municipality to become a City of their dreams.

As usual, allow me to pay tribute to the ordinary men and women, from rural and urban, rich and poor, cleaners, street hawkers, domestic workers, petrol attendants, taxi operators and the business community for the significant role that they play in building, bit by bit, brick by brick, a City of our dreams.

Let me also acknowledge Magoshi a rena who are not just our stakeholders, but co-governors in our various communities.

2024/25 BUDGET

Financial Management

Madam Speaker, Polokwane is on upward trajectory to improve financial management as can be attested by our audit outcomes.

Through our dedicated measures, we are proud to have maintained the unqualified audit opinion for 2022/23. This implies that we are hands on deck to ultimately achieve a clean audit opinion. This achievement is also backed by an audit action plan by management.

We continue to show zero tolerance to those who unethically and illegally temper with their meters and cause the loss of much-needed municipal revenue to meet our service delivery objectives

The budget

Fellow residents, Council has adopted a budget of **R6 billion** for the 2024/25 financial year compared to the **R5.3 billion** adopted in the previous financial year. For the next financial years, R6.3 billion will be budgeted for the 2025/26 financial year whilst R6.9 billion will be budgeted for the 2026/27 financial year.

Around R943 million of the 2024/25 financial year's budget is earmarked for capital projects where 78% of the capital budget is allocated to roads, water and sanitation, energy services and transportation services. This is to ensure that our



infrastructure is strengthened in order to deliver the basic services the City requires for the growth and improvement of the lives of our citizens.

The total service delivery budget for capital projects for 2024/25 is allocated as follows:

- Water: R206.8 million
- Roads and Storm-water: R190.8 million
- Electricity: R63.4 million
- Sanitation: R150.2 million
- Refuse removal: R28.1 million

We have always said that returning funds to National Treasury is a crime against the residents of Polokwane. Our commitment to ensure that money allocated for service delivery is not returned back to the national fiscus has yielded results.

We are also happy that Polokwane did not return any cent to Treasury due to poor performance during 2023/24 mid-year. In March 2024, the Municipality was allocated an additional R86 million of RBIG grant due to good performance.

Tariffs

Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that due to the global and domestic economic downturn, the Municipality had to increase its tariffs on water, property rates and

electricity by a block percentage increase ranging from 6% to 9%, 3% and 12.72%, respectively, while all other services were increased by 6%.

The rate of increase in electricity is in line with the NERSA guidelines which increased electricity tariffs by 12.72% while for water services it is in line with the increase from the Lepelle Northern Water which increased by 9%.

We have always taken key consideration of the plight of our consumers when determining the tariffs (in particular water and electricity) as we have done in the past three financial years detailed as follows.

Indigent Support

We continue to assist indigent households. Provision is made in the operating budget for the subsidizing of indigent households. In this regard, our indigent support has increased from **R272 million** in the previous financial year to around **R286 million** in the current financial year.

This subsidy includes a free **6kl of water, 100kWh units of electricity, a 100% subsidy for refuse removal and sewerage charges. A 100% rebate on assessment rates** will also be given to Indigent households.

Revenue Protection Unit (RPU)



In the endeavour to protect our revenue sources, the Revenue Protection Unit has been utilizing technology and data analytics to monitor and identify with accuracy meter tempering or bridging by both households and businesses.

R9.3 Million worth of fines have been levied for the current financial year as per Council-approved by-laws. The Municipality will continue to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to meter tempering and we encourage the community at large to avoid this unethical practice.

A case was also opened with the SAPS against one ex-contractor for tempering with our electricity infrastructure.

Revenue Collection

In the past financial year, the Municipality collected revenue amounting to **R2.2 billion**.

Whilst we acknowledge the unfavourable socio-economic conditions households and businesses face, we have undertaken a debt collection programme to ensure that people pay their debts as part of our effort to implement our revenue collection policies.

The first phase of the programme was to reduce both the public and commercial debt within the Municipality. Part of this was an incentive programme for residents

to lessen their debt burden. The scheme is conditional on certain criteria where all will benefit, especially those that are most financially distressed.

We have also launched a revenue collection drive to collect what is due to the Municipality by government departments. We are continuing with switching off various government departments so that they can pay up.

Through this drive, we were able to collect approximately **R51 million** that was owed to the Municipality.

In this regard, I want to thank all the residents who always pay for their services on time. It is what makes us a better City in the province.

The Municipality has put emphasis on the recruitment of highly qualified people to ensure prudent financial management. As we speak, we have amongst our senior management two qualified chartered accountants.

CORPORATE AND SHARED SERVICES

Internships

In our endeavour to capacitate young people with the requisite skills, the Municipality through the Financial Management Grant (FMG) and Institutional

Skills Development Grants (ISDG) from the National Treasury, together with private organizations and other spheres of government, has managed to place within the Municipality a total of **116** young people on internship programmes in various departments.

For the 2024/2025 financial year, our internship programme will benefit 100 interns and the budget allocation is R6,5 million. Through LGSETA (the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority), the Municipality is planning to create 50 learnerships to the tune of R2,6 million.

We are also targeting 50 young people for the exposure through the Work Integrated Learning programme wherein graduates need practical experience towards their completion of studies with the existing municipal resources.

Bursary

Polokwane is the only Municipality that annually hosts excellence awards to recognize the top 20 matriculants within the City with gadgets such as laptops, power-banks, data and the opportunity to travel to their various institutions of learning.

Though there is a criterion for the shortlisting of bursaries, for 2023/2024 financial year the focus has been on orphans and from the **40 learners** awarded bursaries,



25 are from the child headed families while 15 are the recipients of Executive Mayor's merit awards. A total of 40 learners benefited from the Executive Mayor's Bursary Fund.

For the next financial year, 50 learners will benefit from the Bursary fund to the tune of R2 million.

Employment

The level of unemployment, especially among the youth, is a source of social distress. Since our pronouncement to prioritize unemployed graduates in entry-level positions:

- 12 permanent employees were appointed on entry level positions that does not require experience,
- 226 permanent positions which are focused on unemployed graduates without experience are still undergoing recruitment process and will be filled before the start of the new financial year, qualified graduates will be prioritized.
- 54 positions at various levels are also under recruitment process and the process should be finalized by end of June 2024.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased that today we have in our midst 32 graduates to be placed at the Leeto La Polokwane as Ambassadors and Cashiers for a period of 12 months starting from the 02nd of May 2024.

We are also joined by 07 recipients of the Mayoral Bursary.

May I request all bursary recipients and graduates to stand for us to appreciate and congratulate them.

In an endeavor to improve customer service to our communities, all employees of the Municipality have signed performance management agreements. However, we still need to put in place proper computerized systems on this function.

The performance management system should also assist in managing overtime that has been a thorny issue in the Municipality. Hence, all recent and new appointments have a clause that indicates a requirement to work on a shift system.

Expanded Public Works Programme and Community Works Programme

- Polokwane Municipality is implementing the Expanded Public Works Programme and the Community Works Programme. For the period 01 July 2023 to 28 March 2024, a total of 5430 EPWP participants were reported of which 2000 were beneficiaries of the presidential greening and cleaning programme in partnership with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment amounting to R70 million. We thank President Cyril Ramaphosa



for identifying Polokwane to be among the 19 municipalities that benefited from this programme.

- On the CWP, the Municipality have 2493 participants who are currently active on the programme.

WATER AND SANITATION

Madam Speaker,

No human being can survive without water. No City can thrive without a sustainable supply of water. No economy can thrive without water and proper sanitation. Water is life and the lifeblood of our City. We have expanded access to water to 72% of our population since 1994.

We have long acknowledged the longstanding water deficit within the Municipality which spans over five years and mainly attributed to a lack of preventative maintenance on critical water infrastructure, particularly pump stations 1 and 2 and the Specon pipeline. The water deficit in the City is currently more than **40 megaliters per day**.

In this score, we remain grateful to our residents for walking with us in our continuing journey to find long-lasting solutions to our water challenges.



The Municipality is working tirelessly with various key stakeholders to ensure that we remain on course to execute our clear-cut plans including short-term, medium-term and long-term measures to address the issue of water provision.

Ground Water Development

In the short-term, the Municipality has dedicated its focus to ensure the advancement of massive groundwater development programmes and most of these projects are registering good progress.

Council approved **R48 million** in December 2022 to complete the 4th Industrial Revolution **Seshego Water Treatment Works** and associated boreholes. This was after the projects had funding challenges emanating from projects been implemented without approval by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

We are pleased to announce that the treatment works testing has been completed and the plant will begin to supply water to Seshego reservoir. The transfer of skills to the internal staff is underway and the official opening will be done in Mid-May. This critical intervention will improve water provision to the people of Seshego by bringing an additional **10 MI/day**.

As indicated earlier, following engagements with the Department of Water and Sanitation and the intervention of Minister Senzo Mchunu to regularise these

projects, an additional **R86 million** was made available in March 2024 to complete all our five groundwater projects. These funds will ensure the completion of **Sandriver North Water Treatment Works** by end of December 2024 which will bring **18 MI/day** to benefit the City and the surrounding urban edge.

Bulk Water Supply

The Municipality is still contracted to Lepelle Northern Water for the supply of bulk water from two schemes: Ebenezer Bulk Water Scheme (**32 MI/day**) and Olifantspoort Bulk Water Scheme (**27 MI/day**).

As part of the medium-term plan, we reported last year that the Department of Water and Sanitation allocated **R1,4 billion** to enable Lepelle Northern Water to upgrade the Olifants and Ebenezer schemes. These are projects to be implemented by Lepelle Northern Water to bring an additional **40 MI/day** to Polokwane. Completion of these projects will unlock stalled developments in the area and boost job creation. This will also address the future developmental needs of Polokwane.

Lepelle Northern Water as the implementing agent has appointed contractors for upgrading of all **pump stations and pumping mains**, alongside the Olifantspoort and Ebenezer bulk water schemes. The projects are underway, and the planned



completion is end of November 2024. The upgrades will benefit the regional water schemes alongside Olifantspoort and Ebenezer Bulk Water Scheme as part of the off-takes connections.

The Municipality is at advanced stages of concluding the implementation readiness studies for Sebayeng Turfloop Diepriver wellfields as well as the Refurbishment and Upgrading of Dap Naude Bulk Water Supply and Water conservation and demand management aimed at minimising water losses within the network. These plans will be completed before end of June 2024.

The Municipality has also submitted to Infrastructure SA the following projects for assistance with planning and to secure funding – Replacement of AC Pipes Phase II, Wastewater Reclamation, and the Exploration of Malmane Dolomites to extract 20 MI/day of groundwater. These projects are already registered and the work to secure funding is already underway.

Our long-term focus is still on the De-hoop Dam Project which is envisaged through a partnership of the DWS with the Sekhukhune mining sector to extract **150 to 200 ML** of water to Polokwane. The project is estimated to cost **R24 Billion** through a public-private partnership and will unlock development and job creation.



We reported last year that Council has also decided to establish a separate water entity to be named 'Polokwane Water' under the control of the Municipality to improve our response to water disruptions and supply thereof. Progress in this regard will be reported before August 2024.

We are thankful to the Ministry of Water and Sanitation led by Minister Senzo Mchunu, the Private Sector, the Provincial Government led Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, Lepelle Northern Water, Eskom, Greater Tzaneen Municipality, and other stakeholders, for their continuous involvement in our efforts to resolve critical aspects of our water issues.

Regional Water Supply

We continue to give dedicated focus to every cluster on rural water supply. The Municipality has been subdivided into 16 Regional Water Schemes.

Madam Speaker, for the 2024/2025 financial year, over **R230 million** is allocated to improving the water supply to our regional water schemes. The Municipality will drill, equip and electrify additional boreholes and extend reticulation to Molepo RWS, Mothapo RWS, Boyne RWS, Chuene Maja RWS, Badimong RWS, Olifantspoort RWS, Bakone RWS, Aganang RWS, Moletjie East & Moletjie South, Segwashi RWS, Moletjie North RWS and Sebayeng Dikgale RWS.



We will ensure that the planning and development of technical reports for Mankweng RWS and Lastehoop RWS are fast-tracked to obtain approval from the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Madam Speaker, these projects will provide additional water to more than 2000 Households through a combination of standpipes and yard connections.

Water Conservation Water Demand Management

The Municipality is still challenged by the high percentage of water distribution losses. Over the past few years, the water losses have been reported to be more than 30 %, which is above the norms and standards set by the national government.

In order to ensure that there is full accountability of water usage by consumers and revenue enhancement, the Municipality has set aside more than **R9 million** to install new meters, particularly in Mankweng, and replace dysfunctional water meters within the City, Seshego and Mankweng. In the next financial year, the City will also re-commence with the replacement of AC pipes programme that was started in 2016 aimed at reducing water losses.

In partnership with the private sector, Polokwane has continued to work with Anglo American, South African Breweries and the Strategic Water Partner Network to finalise studies on Water Conservation Water Demand Management. A funding option report to implement identified programmes is set to be presented to the Municipality by May 2024.

Wastewater Treatment Plants

While water is life, sanitation is dignity. We have increased the number of households with flush toilets connected to sewerage from 22.3% in 1996 to 48.2% in 2022.

We have reported previously that the existing wastewater treatment plants in the City, Seshego and Mankweng have not been adequate to meet the growing demand for proper sanitation in the City. This was also due to a lack of proper operations and maintenance.

Accordingly, we allocated contractors to refurbish and upgrade with an amount of **R150 million** set aside for this purpose.

In April 2023, we appointed three contractors to attend to the immediate remedial/refurbishment works for all our existing wastewater treatment works.

We are pleased to report that Phase 1 of refurbishing the Mankweng Wastewater treatment has been completed as of October 2023, while Polokwane and Seshego refurbishment is expected to be completed by June 2024. Thus far, there has been significant improvements in the operation of the plants.

The construction of the **R362 million** new Polokwane Wastewater Treatment Works civil works to treat an additional **20 ML/day** is now underway. Its completion will bring relief to the existing Polokwane and Seshego treatment plants that are now operating beyond the design capacity. Moreover, it will also facilitate plans for future wastewater reclamation. The ultimate design of plant is **100 ML/day** and will be implemented in phases to accommodate the future growth and development.

We still aim to relieve the current wastewater treatment plant in Ladanna and eradicate the smell that is a nuisance to the communities in that area. Progress has been registered in this regard and the smell has been reduced.

We have set aside funds for the finalisation of the implementation readiness study for the Upgrade of the Mankweng Wastewater treatment work and the associated sewer network.

Rural Sanitation



On sanitation, we reported delays in the implementation of our rural sanitation programme for the period ending 30 June 2023. Contractors experienced adverse ground conditions and that caused some of them to apply for extension of time. The delays have since been addressed.

We are expanding rural sanitation to improve our people's dignity. For 2022/23, we allocated **1600 VIP toilets** for the Sebayeng Dikgale Cluster. For 2023/24, we are constructing **1294 VIP toilets** at Moletjie Cluster.

We have taken a decision to implement rural household sanitation per cluster. A budget of approximately **R30,9 million** has been allocated for the 2024/25 financial year to provide about **1666 VIP** toilets in the Aganang cluster. This will continue to make an impact in improving the lives of our rural communities.

ROADS AND STORM-WATER

Roads

Madam Speaker, roads remain an important catalyst for economic activity and the creation of job opportunities. This was also echoed by communities during the IDP consultation process.

It is for this reason that the Municipality is implementing a road project in almost every ward in line with our ward-based planning. During the IDP community consultative sessions, we presented our plans to ensure the tarring and paving of more roads per cluster.

We reported last year that the majority of the roads have exceeded their design lifespan, especially in the City, Seshego and Mankweng clusters and as a result attracting potholes, particularly during the rainy season.

We continue to prioritize the tarring, paving and strengthening of our yellow fleet capacity. We are also continuing with the war against potholes as well as the unblocking of storm-water drainage systems which is championed by the Executive Mayor to ensure safe and accessible roads for private motorists and public service vehicles.

Most of our roads in rural areas are not accessible and we have thus acquired two graders and one TLB as part of our efforts to expand the yellow fleet and are planning to procure at least five more graders in the new financial year so that each cluster can have a grader. This will also reduce the over-reliance on private service providers.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the Municipality tarred a total of 10.52km from 48 roads projects.

In the 2023/2024 financial year, the Municipality will focus on upgrading from gravel to surfacing and paving of strategic roads in various clusters. The Municipality has also planned and designed 45 roads projects that will be implemented in in the 2024/25 financial year in various clusters.

These strategic roads include, amongst others,

- Upgrading of road D3383 in Setumong via Mahoai in Aganang cluster,
- Upgrading of arterial road D3355 from Monotwane to Matlala Clinic in Aganang cluster,
- Upgrading of road from Monyoaneng to Lonsdale in Moletjie cluster,
- Paving of internal street in Sebayeng/Dikgale Cluster at Ga-Makgoba Moshate,
- Paving of internal streets of Mankgaile;
- Upgrading the road from Tshebela to Moshate in Molepo/Chuene/Maja Cluster,
- Upgrading the road from the traffic circle to Mothapo Moshate in Mankweng Cluster,
- Upgrading of Matobole to Silicon in Molepo/Chuene/Maja,

- Paving of various internal streets in Seshego Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 3, Zone 4, Zone 5, Zone 6 and Zone 8 in Seshego Cluster,
 - Paving of internal street in Ga-Makibelo to Hlahla ring road in Moletjie Cluster.
 - Upgrading of arterial road from Ditshweneng to Maja Moshate,
- And, the upgrading of the road from D3377 from Moetagare to Setumong D3382 in Aganang Cluster.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, the Municipality is planning to upgrade 15km of gravel roads to surfacing and paving, construct 3 low-level bridges, patch 45 000m² of potholes, grade 3400km of gravel roads, re-gravel 30km of roads and construct 2km of storm water infrastructure.

In the 2024/25 financial year, we will be rehabilitating 16 roads projects in the City cluster which amount to R61 million which includes among others:

- Leeto route maintenance at Thabo Mbeki street en route to Meropa ;

Storm-Water

Madam Speaker, we have also taken into cognizance areas prone to flash and localised floods during rainy seasons by addressing the storm-water challenges through a phase-in approach, wherein four storm-water projects are now in the planning and design stages.



The Municipality will also be implementing the following storm water projects through internal funding and IUDG budget:

- Upgrading of storm water system in Seshego at zone 1 extension Bookelo and Chris Hani, Zone 3 Oliver Thambo and Thakgalang extension,
- Upgrading of storm water system adjacent to Jumbo in Laboria,
- Upgrading of storm water system in Ivy park, ridge, Emperor street,
- Upgrading of storm water system in Sterk park, Flora park,
- Upgrading of storm water system in Seshego, Thutu street,
- Upgrading of storm water system in Polokwane Ext 76.

The Municipality has also implemented the Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) infrastructure project that was funded through the KFW Bank of Germany. On behalf of Council and our residents, I want to take this opportunity to thank the KFW Bank for considering our NMT project to construct 4,1KM of universally accessible NMT infrastructure. This project is completed and is benefiting communities of Wards 8, 23 and 39.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES – LEETO LA POLOKWANE

Madam Speaker, an effective transport system remains one of the key ingredients in the City's drive towards the realisation of the metro status. Public transportation



is not merely a convenience but a vital artery in a thriving economy. It serves as the lifeline, connecting us to places of education, health, employment, recreation, and essential services.

The Leeto La Polokwane bus system continues to experience growth in terms of passenger numbers. For the month of March, 63 120 passengers were carried by our buses at an average of 2 104 daily passengers.

The system's ability to carry more passengers is however hampered by insufficient bus fleet as 10x9m buses remain undelivered. Consequently, Council instituted legal proceedings to recover funds for the outstanding buses.

The taxi industry remains a key stakeholder in the ongoing implementation of Leeto La Polokwane Phase 1A. A contractor for refurbishment of Oriental Plaza (Indian Centre) taxi rank into a state of the art and universally accessible public transport facility is establishing site.

We do have within our midst the affected associations of the implementation Phase 1A, Mr United Nemahungani representing Seshego Polokwane Taxi Association, Mr Freedy Andreas representing Westernburg Taxi Association and Mr Joas Sathekge representing Flora Park Pietersburg Taxi Association.

Plans are unfolding to expand the integrated public transport network project to other clusters and phases beyond Phase 1A. The City is engaging the National Department of Transport to extend the service to other phases. The expansion process will also involve undertaking of surveys to determine high demand areas.

Madam Speaker, project management and performance monitoring are important aspects in the implementation of infrastructure projects. As a result, the Municipality had to apply consequence management by terminating tenders awarded to some of the contractors due to poor performance on certain BRT infrastructure projects such as Widening of Sandriver Bridge. It is, however, important to indicate that a new consultant and a contractor have recently been appointed.

In terms of project implementation for the 2023/24 financial year, the following are relevant:

- Practical completion on the Construction of Bus Station (General Joubert Street), our communities should expect an official opening within this financial year. Practical hand over for Upper Structure (Phase 1) was done and subsequently resulted in Phase 2 of the station that includes;
 - Relocation of the traffic light at Thabo Mbeki,
 - Adjustment of the platform heights as well as installation of the Cradle kerbs,



- Signage and Wayfinding,
- Fencing of the station and ablution facilities,
- Security gates and automatic booms,
- Installation of sleeves on Thabo Mbeki,
- Lowering of existing manhole

Planned projects for the 2024/25 financial year include:

- Completion of the transit mall,
- Construction and provision of Bus Depot Upper Structure in Seshego, Zone 8 in Ward 11. The consultant is busy with detailed designs and the project will be implemented in the 2024/25 financial year.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Madam Speaker, building integrated human settlements is central to our objective towards ensuring that we restore dignity among our communities through access to decent housing.

Level 2 Accreditation

We were delighted when the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs accorded Polokwane Municipality the Level two Housing Accreditation status on 01 February 2024. The signing of the



Implementation Protocol (IP), which is an agreement that formalizes the delegation of Housing functions to the Municipality, elevated us from level 1 to level 2 housing accreditation.

This historic moment, made the Municipality to be the first in the province to be empowered by the Department as the accrediting authority to plan, budget, appoint implementing agents, and manage housing projects. At this stage, we await the gazetting of the budget by Coghsta.

Breaking New Ground Houses

The Municipality is experiencing a scarcity of suitably located land for human settlement. Therefore, there is a need to densify human settlements. One of the new townships being established (Kingdom Park) is earmarked to pilot Walk-up RDP's.

We are indeed breaking new ground in terms of human settlements. About 2 500 houses have been built in the current financial year as phase 3 of the informal settlement upgrading in Polokwane Ext 127 and 126.

As part of the assignment of Accreditation, the Municipality will start to build four hundred and four (404) housing units in 2024/2025 financial year, which will benefit both the urban and rural wards of our City.

Removal of Asbestos Roofs

The Municipality in conjunction with CoGHSTA through the Housing Development Agency is working on a project of replacement of asbestos roofs in Seshego in wards 12, 13 and 17 which were previously destroyed by hail. About 1 500 roofs have been replaced and currently 755 housing units are being implemented as Phase 2 of the project.

The other areas like Westernburg, Mankweng, and Sebayeng will be targeted when the allocation is made available.

Military Veterans Housing

The Department of Human Settlements has a programme of working together with the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) to ensure that former liberation struggle veterans are taken care of in terms of access to adequate housing. As Polokwane, we have donated 50 sites to accommodate military veterans who are found to have no houses. Thus far, 15 houses have been completed and handed over to the beneficiaries on the 14 March 2024

Title Deeds Registration

The Municipality is working hard to ensure the registration of title deeds. As we speak, over 2,000 title deeds have been registered and delivered to the Municipality for this current financial year. On the 14th of March 2024, the MEC for

CoGHSTA handed over 3044 title deeds in Extension 78. Since 1994, the formal dwellings have increased from 77.5% to 95% as reported by stats SA in 1996/2022.

Polokwane Housing Association

We wish to report on progress regarding the Annadale Ext 2 Social Housing Project. We have secured funding from the Social Housing Regulatory Authority to construct an elevated tank. The construction time-frame is estimated at the end of July 2024, which will be followed by tenanting of the project immediately afterwards.

ENERGY PROVISION

Madam Speaker, energy supply is the backbone of any economic activity. It is an essential source of power for households, businesses and industries.

Hence, the ANC-led government has expanded access to electricity since the advent of the democratic dispensation to areas that never dreamed of accessing this basic necessity of life. According to the Stats SA report of 1996, access to electricity in was 38.5% as of 2022 Stats SA Census results. Today, access to electricity has increased to 95%. This increase points to the achievement of almost universal access with a backlog of only 5%.

We will do more working with Eskom to address the current backlog, especially in the new extensions. We must also acknowledge the big elephant in the room – **load shedding**, which remains a challenge that has gripped the entire nation for some time now.

Nevertheless, the past few weeks have witnessed a massive relief from power cuts due to the leadership of Minister Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa in implementing the energy action plan and improved planned maintenance by the power utility.

Today marks 34 days without the country experiencing loadshedding. As a City, we are planning on building a solar farm of 90MW to reduce our consumption on Eskom to help in addressing loadshedding.

The improved performance of the power grid does not mean that load shedding is gone for good. What is clear to us is that over-reliance on Eskom for energy supply is not sustainable going into the future.

Hence, we are in continuous engagements with the national government and Eskom to ensure that we have two forms of energy sources – the one that we buy from Eskom and the other that we generate in partnership with independent power producers to address the lack of capacity at Eskom. We have also written to

the Ministry of Electricity to expand our license area given the capacity challenges of the power utility.

Our residents are also encouraged to embark on other sources of energy generation (SSEG – small scale embedded generation). We request those who have installed such sources to register their systems as well as those who are still intending to do so.

Application forms are available on the municipal website and Energy office container 9 at the Civic Centre. The process of rebate for feedback is underway and those who will generate more energy and feedback to the system will receive rebate to do that.

The Municipality continues to appreciate the efforts of government, through President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, to ensure the exemption of water infrastructure from load shedding. This gives credence to the fact that as Polokwane alone we cannot solve all our problems alone. We value the partnership and support from other spheres of government and the private sector.

Rural electrification also remains one of the most challenging areas as Eskom is currently experiencing major capacity challenges in rural Polokwane.

We will continue to put pressure on Eskom to ensure the process of electrification of the areas is expedited. Eskom committed that from April 2025, the Rampheri substation will be up and running and provide more capacity in areas of Molepo/Maja/Chuene and Mankweng Clusters.

In the City Cluster, we have three projects that are running at Extension 113 phase 1 with 468 connections, Extension 133 phase two with 400 connections and Extension 40 (146).

For the current financial year, the Municipality is implementing the following electrification projects:

- 455 households in Seshego Ext 133, phases one and two. The projects are at 90% and 61%, respectively, but the contractor for phase one is terminated and we are busy with appointment of new contractor.
- 202 households in Ga-Thaba are completed and energized.
- 66 households in Feke/Matshane are at 100% completed and energized.
- 1089 households in Boikhutjong Phase 3 are at 92% towards completion.
- And, the electrification of urban households in Extension 40 which is at 54% and Extension 133 phase 2 at 52%.

Solar Water Geysers

The solar water geysers project continues as part of the energy saving. To date, 8000 units have been installed and seven private companies are busy with 3500 units. One company is busy correcting the 480 that were installed but were not working due to manufacturing challenges.

With reliable water supply, we will ensure that all new RDP houses, mainly indigents, are provided with solar geysers upon completion.

Substations

In order to provide future capacity for new developments, the Municipality has just completed the Bakone substation next to Silicon mine. The Matlala substation along the Matlala Road is at design stage. The 66Kv Line from Bakone to IOTA substation will be advertised soon in order to provide security of supply through a ring feed to the city.

Public Lights

Illumination of public spaces remains one of our priority areas. Last year, we reported that **R5 million** had been allocated for the project to install high mast lights at Ga-Mabotja (Ward 05), Ga-Tshiloane (Ward 28), Makgeng (Ward 05), Laastehoop (Ward 05), and Ralema (Ward 36).

We are pleased to report that the project is completed and the high mast lights are solar powered.

The process to appoint a service provider for five new solar-powered high mast lights is currently underway. In the same vein, Eskom will energize three out of six High Mast lights which could not be energized in the past due to capacity challenges. The three are undergoing connections while the remaining three will be converted to solar.

In the coming year, we will be introducing a system of street lights that will ensure that those who are keen on vandalizing and stealing our infrastructure no longer find cables to steal. We will be introducing built-in solar-powered street lights and high mast lights in the residential areas to mitigate against the stealing of our cables and vandalism. The first programme of public solar street lighting was implemented in Extension 44.

The Municipality continues with the fight against this deadly scourge of cable theft and vandalism of infrastructure. But we cannot fight this battle alone. We need the assistance of all our residents and stakeholders to rid our City of these acts of criminality. After all, the theft of our cables and damage to infrastructure negatively affects service delivery and thus impact directly on our residents.

As part of our efforts against theft and vandalism, we have set aside an amount of R5 million for solar streetlights to be installed in various streets in the City and Seshego clusters targeting the entrance roads.

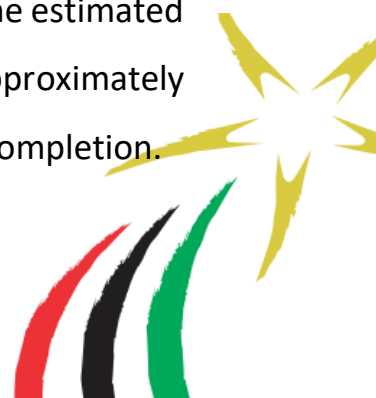
ANCHOR PROJECTS

Madam Speaker, the creation of job opportunities is an overarching pillar of our anchor and catalytic projects. The Municipality has established a partnership with private sector players to use land at our disposal for development, the stimulation of the local economy and the creation of job opportunities. To this end, there are various catalytic projects which are unfolding within our City. We have indeed put Polokwane under construction.

Academic Hospital near Edupark

Last year, we spoke about the R5 billion mega-investment in the form of the Academic Hospital. Today, we can report that we successfully turned the sod in July 2023 for what promises to be a state-of-the-art medical facility. This hospital is built in collaboration with the National **Department of Health and DBSA**, and the construction is underway near Edupark under land donated by the Municipality.

The Academic Hospital will be the first of its kind in the province and the estimated economic spinoffs associated with this project are the creation of approximately 2400 jobs during construction and about 1000 permanent jobs upon completion.



The construction project is still earmarked to conclude in 2028.

Ivypark Hospital

We also spoke of the privately driven 150 beds hospital development to be located along the N1 at Ivydale which will cater for the much-needed hospital beds in the City, following approval by Polokwane Municipal Planning Tribunal. The project cost is estimated at **R450 million** for direct construction.

This development is expected to create 600 jobs during construction and 450 jobs permanent upon completion. The developer is currently finalizing the township register and proclamation processes.

Greenery Shopping Complex

In October last year, the Municipality in collaboration with the Networth and Moolman Groups led the official opening of the upmarket shopping complex known as the Greenery. The opening of the shopping complex was a historic occasion that signaled that indeed Polokwane is open for business.

This R230 million worth of investment was part of our concerted efforts to grow our local economy and create job opportunities working with the private sector.

Molepo Mall Development

It is our great delight to announce that we have now attracted another investment to build a Mall which will be constructed at Sebjeng in Ga-Molepo, farm 1050 LS. This will be a mixed commercial development of a shopping mall that is 12500m², a filling station, a drive-through restaurant and a hardware.

The estimated cost of the development is R220 million and the anticipation of breaking the ground is mid-June 2024.

Netcare Akeso Psychiatric Hospital

On 25 April 2024, we were part of the sod turning for the first of its kind in the Province, the state-of-the-art Netcare Akeso psychiatric hospital. Phase one of the 87-beds facility has commenced construction on Polokwane Ext 138, Grobler Street side (R71). This phase one will be approximately R200 million and create about 120 permanent jobs and 472 temporary jobs.

Provincial Theatre/Arts and Culture Hub

We were proud to do the sod turning for the Provincial Theatre in February this year, which will be located along the R37, next to Bakone Malapa. The construction is projected to cost **R500 million** and is expected to create 350 temporary jobs during construction and 50 permanent jobs upon completion. The Department of Public Works contractors are already on site to commence with the construction.

Bakone Malapa Arts and cultural hub as proposed, will be of tremendous support to artists in terms of film, recording studio, theatre, and an incubation stall.

This will increase tourism at the municipal facility and form part of the belt of the sporting precinct as proposed in the Spatial Development Framework, which stretches from Peter Mokaba stadium.

New TUT Campus

Plans are still on course with Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) to build a brand-new campus in the City of Polokwane. The campus will be located along Silicon Road next to the Municipal Airfield opposite the Polokwane Game Reserve.

Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), the Department of Higher Education and Training through the Limpopo Community Education and Training (CET) College, Capricorn District Municipality (CDM) and CoGHSTA have requested the donation of land to establish Polokwane Campus (TUT), Head Office , Community Learning Centre (CET) and Disaster Management Centre.

The envisaged development by the institutions referred to above is estimated to cost over **R2 billion**. The Municipality stands to benefit monthly from rates and taxes payable upon completion estimated at over R1 million.

The larger Polokwane community will benefit from services to be provided by these institutions. Hundreds to thousands of temporary jobs will be created during development phase and hundreds to a thousand during their lifetime.

Polokwane Game Reserve Eco-estate

Another catalytic project is the Polokwane Game Reserve Eco-estate. The proposal for the Eco-estate will boost the Polokwane Game Reserve for tourism and accommodation facilities whilst attracting investors in the south-eastern part of the city as the future development. This will be a highly marketed residential development where man is in contact with nature. The township application process commenced in the 2023/24 financial year.

Infrastructure South Africa

The Municipality submitted capital infrastructure projects to the government agency known as Infrastructure South Africa for technical assistance and funding. The submitted projects are for water, roads and electricity projects. All the necessary project documentation was submitted.

Further, Infrastructure South Africa come to Polokwane August 2023 and requested additional projects to be submitted. The Municipality submitted projects

under City Planning and Economic Development. We received an update on the 01st February 2024 from Infrastructure SA that for now three (3) projects were registered for feasibility studies.

The projects are:

- Feasibility Study on the Review of the Water Services Development Plan,
- Feasibility Study on Melamine Dolomite (water extraction),
- Feasibility Study on Mankweng Waste Water Treatment Plant.

WASTE AND ENVIRONMENT

Madam Speaker, the Municipality remains committed to the significant reduction of our waste collection backlogs, especially in rural areas.

Accordingly, one of the interventions we have embarked upon is a programme to construct rural transfer stations and lessen the distance between the serviced areas and the main landfill site.

The planning for the construction of Molepo, Westernburg and Seshego Transfer Stations is completed and a consultant is appointed for the planning of both Ga Chuene and Ga-Maja transfer stations. In the next financial year, construction will commence for the rural transfer stations.

As part of recognizing the importance of the institution of traditional leadership, we will ensure that each traditional council has a skip bin for waste management.

We have also obtained the operating license for the extension of the Weltevreden landfill site from LEDET to construct additional cells which will commence in the next financial year.

We continue to procure waste removal equipment to build internal capacity to render waste management services through our own trucks and employees to eventually phase out contracted services.

Greening project

Madam Speaker, the effects of climate change in South Africa resulting from steady increases in carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere can no longer be denied or ignored. Part of our climate change mitigation strategy is through greening (tree planting).

In 2023/24, the Municipality managed to plant 12000 trees to date, and the programme is continuing in order to reach the set target of 16 000 trees. Thus far, Polokwane has been doing incredibly well in environmental management.

In September 2023, the Municipality was awarded the National Arbor City Award for being the best in the country in tree planting and open space management. In February 2024, the Municipality again won both the District and the Provincial Greenest Municipal Competition.

All the 45 wards have directly benefitted from this programme which will enable waste management capacity whilst addressing service delivery backlog, skills development and unemployment within our communities.

Through the Youth Development Programme, we have recruited 256 youth graduates from various fields of study, including Horticulture, Tourism, Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Management.

Parks maintenance

The state of our parks remain on an improved trajectory, especially the Civic Centre Park. We have appointed a consultant and contractor to start the construction of the ablution facility at Tom Naude Park and the construction is at 95% complete.

On the other hand, planning and design of parks including rural regional parks is in process. Going forward, we are planning to fence off our parks and construct ablution facilities.



By-law enforcement and security

In the past financial year, the Municipality appointed twelve extra law enforcement officers that paved the way for the establishment of a 24-hour shift system for patrolling municipal infrastructure and curbing of the cable theft trend.

In the 2024/2025 financial, we will appoint 20 more additional law enforcement officers to complement the current staff component.

The Municipality continues to work with the Community Safety Forum, which is a strategic factor in the fight against crime and has proven to be instrumental in the arrests related to cable theft and crime in general.

The Municipality is also conducting Safer City Operations weekly together with the SAPS and other agencies to clean the City and the project is yielding positive feedback.

This financial year, we installed CCTV cameras at three additional intersections within the City to support the fight against crime and these will be increased in the coming financial year.

Traffic and Licensing

Madam Speaker, we have reported in our last State of the City Address about the temporary suspension of learners license services at Mankweng. Today, we can report that we have procured mobile classes to continue offering this critical service while the construction of Mankweng Traffic center is underway. This is a multi-year project which we anticipate to be completed in 2025/2026.

The project of upgrading the City Traffic Centre is progressing and is expected to be completed at the beginning of the 2024/25 financial year.

The Aganang Traffic Centre is also up and running after some time of non-operation due to continuous break-ins at the centre. Security has been increased at this facility.

Disaster management and fire services

The Municipality has received R18.7 million from the Disaster Response Grant to line the eroded earth channel at Buite and Excelsior streets and upgrading of storm water control system. We will continue to upgrade storm water control from Nelson Mandela between Doloret and Blaauwburg street and Doloriet, Blaauwburg and Bulawayo.



The scope of the project will be to rehabilitate the existing damaged surface roads and upgrade the current storm water systems. It gears towards eliminating frequent water ponding and flash flood to adjacent properties.

This will result in storm water control system having sufficient capacity to convey runoff safely during heavy storms without causing erosion. The drainage system will also accommodate frequent storms and associated runoff.

SANTAM, through Capricorn District Municipality, has also donated lifesaving equipment in November 2023 which are critical to protect properties and lives. We are grateful to SANTAM for their generous donation.

SPORTS

The City aspires to be the sporting capital of the province and tourism hub of the country. We are using sports to promote a healthy lifestyle and cultivate a sense of social cohesion. This requires us to maintain our sporting facilities to be of international standard.

On the maintenance, the Peter Mokaba Stadium continues to be a shining example of the hardwork of our own employees to maintain municipal facilities instead on

over-reliance on private service providers. We will replicate this approach even at the Seshego stadium.

Last year, we upgraded our tennis courts to meet international standards such as Polokwane Tennis Court and Seshego Tennis Court. In the next financial year, we will continue to upgrade other courts in the Municipality such as Nirvana and Westernburg just to mention a few.

Nevertheless, there are some grey areas, an example being the International Softball Stadium project that commenced during the 2019/20 financial year. The completion of the project was hindered by a number of challenges, notably the insufficient budgeting.

However, Council has budgeted for co-funding of the project together with the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture to ensure completion of the much-awaited sport facility in the next MTREF. The bid for the construction of Softball Stadium closed on 18 March 2024 and we are now at the appointment stage.

We are continuing with our programme to expand sport facilities to the rural communities to ensure inclusivity that even children from rural areas could have access to sport facilities of the same standard as those of their counterparts in the urban areas.

In the next financial year, we will be completing the following stadiums:

- Extension 44/78 Sports Complex,
- Upgrading of Seshego Stadium to meet PSL standards,
- Molepo Sports Complex.

We are happy to report that the contractor for the construction of Mankweng stadium has been appointed.

Our approach in the upcoming years is to look closer to combi-courts to ensure that the rate of facility delivered to those local communities is expedited, as compared to focus on facilities that are taking time to complete and operate.

Madam Speaker,

In the 2023/2024 season, we are excited to announce that the Municipality will have more than **50 football matches** played at the Peter Mokaba Sport Precinct with majority of the matches played at both the new stadium and old stadium.

This is as a result of four DSTV teams, namely Kaizer Chiefs, Supersport United, Sekhukhune United and Polokwane City, that have signed a 3-year contract with the Municipality coupled with PSL Cups to be played at the stadiums.

Last year, the Municipality entered into an agreement with South African Breweries to bring the All-Star Carling Cup Final to Polokwane for the first time. There is an ongoing discussion to do better on that front as our wish is to develop long term relationship for mutual benefit of both parties and eventually host the main final.

The economic spin-offs of our sports tourism drive show rapid upswing of fans coming to the stadium, the economic beneficiation to hawkers selling their wares at the stadium, security personnel getting opportunities for freelance work, and local retail shopping experiencing a revenue upswing. The hospitality sector is also benefiting from the increased tourism and number of visitors to the City.

We have made significant progress in improving the state of the Nirvana Swimming pool and are happy to announce that it will be opened before the next season of swimming, after this winter. The plant room will be equipped soon and commissioned after it was closed for almost seven years.

On 27 April, the Municipality successfully hosted the 2024 Edition of the Polokwane City Marathon 2024 which saw participation by approximately **3000 runners**, including the youth, from different parts of our country and beyond. On 03 May, we will host the Charity Golf Day as part of our drive to raise funds for academically deserving and financially needy students.

We are particularly looking at ensuring that the events are well sponsored to avoid digging deeper into our already strained budgets for Sport and Recreation.

We appreciate all our residents who are participating in marathons such CDM Marathon, Seshego, Run for cancer and Mall of the North Marathon.

Lastly, on sport, we want to congratulate Comrades runners who have qualified and started preparations for the 2024 Comrades Marathon and we wish them all the best as they prepare the mammoth task of running the ultimate human race.

CONCLUSION

Fellow residents,

As I conclude, I want to reiterate that we remain committed to realizing the metro vision and believe that our first step of moving from grade five to six is on course.

We are confident that gloom and despondency will never defeat our dedicated efforts with the support of our residents to build better communities.

As **Walt Whitman** says, *“Keep your face always toward the sunshine - and shadows will fall behind you”*. The naturally progressive City of Polokwane is walking towards the sunshine to realize the fruits of the sunrise of our tomorrow.

We want to thank our various partners and stakeholders including traditional leaders and communities for their support throughout this journey of moving Polokwane towards the achievement of a metropolitan status.

As we have explained before, the metro status is not for its sake but is about development and job creation and a better life for all our residents. It is for that reason that we are passionately pursuing this vision.

We thank you for your support as this Council and administration under the hardworking Municipal Manager, Mme Thuso Nemugumoni.

We want to reassure the residents of Polokwane that whilst we have done a lot to change lives of residents, we are more than prepared for the challenges ahead of us.

We want to appreciate all our artists for putting our country on the map through national and international recognition, include King Monada, Janisto and CK, Makhadzi, Shandesh, Kharishma and Charlie Bazz just to mention for few. They continue to put a smile on the faces of our residents. Our local artists remain our inspiration.

We have always believed that the life of our City must be characterized by a 24-hour economy. Whilst others go to sleep, others must get up to work. Cities across the world developed faster this way.

We are blessed to be the host City of the Holy land of Moria. As the religious capital of Africa, we are host to the Zion Christian Church and ST Engenas Zion Christian Church. We are inspired by the founder of the ZCC, St Engenas Lekganyane, who despite challenges persevered to build one of the biggest churches in Africa.

We are inspired by the heroic struggles of Kgoshi Makgoba and other great king warriors such Malebogo and Sefako Makgatho who preserved to fight against land dispossession and forged unity for a common goal.

We are inspired to build a better Polokwane, the City of Stars and a destination of choice.

We are inspired by your support to continue as the residents to wake every morning and ensure that we continue with the journey of building a City of our dreams. A City that will inspire growth and development in our geographic area.

We are inspired by Dr Kaizer Motaung who grew from being a soccer player to found one of the biggest and most supported soccer clubs in the country.

We are inspired by men and women who are determined to build a better Polokwane.

Pula!

Reaga Polokwane

I thank you.

