



The City We Are Building Together

**Dear residents of Johannesburg,**

Our story began long before each of us called this place home. It started in 1886, when the discovery of gold transformed an ordinary piece of land into a powerhouse of possibility. Within 14 years, Johannesburg had become the largest town in Southern Africa, attracting people from across the world who came to seek opportunity, dignity, and a future. Through times of segregation and the rise of democracy, Joburg remained resilient, a city that endures, adapts, and continues to grow.

This same spirit carries us now, as we stand at another turning point in our journey. We are aware that Johannesburg has faced significant challenges. Revenue has declined, infrastructure has weakened, lawlessness has threatened our safety, and poor planning has slowed service delivery. In-migration has stretched communities faster than we can service them. Too many families have been left without the dignity of reliable basic services.

These difficulties are real. But we are bigger than these challenges, and we are facing them with courage, unity, and urgency. To fast-track recovery, Johannesburg is placed under the Presidential Support Package—a collaborative effort between the City, Province, and National Government. This partnership strengthens our financial systems, improves service delivery, helps revive our economy, and focuses attention on our inner-city and township communities.

This is not about surrendering control; it is about joining hands for the sake of our residents and our future. To respond quicker and effectively, we established a Service Delivery War Room. This platform enables us to track problems in real-time, coordinate departments, and intervene promptly. It has helped us identify 24 priority issues that need to be addressed within 12 months. We are not dreaming from a distance; we are actioning things daily.

To ensure faster delivery, we also created a specialised operations team known as the Bomb Squad. Its task is to unlock bottlenecks, protect infrastructure, and work closely with local communities to ensure that solutions are implemented where they matter most. Recently, the City achieved a significant legal victory that sets us firmly on the path of restoring dignity, order, and fairness.

The Johannesburg High Court ruled in the City's favour, affirming our right to enforce municipal by-laws and regulate informal trading in the inner city and beyond. This judgment is not about shutting doors. It is about restoring dignity to our streets, ensuring that trading takes place responsibly, and protecting the rights of law-abiding traders and residents. Every person deserves a city that is orderly, safe, and fair. This victory gives us the legal clarity we need to act decisively.

We will continue to work with traders so that economic opportunities thrive within the law, and so that the public environment is protected for all. We are strengthening the systems that sustain our daily lives. We are also working to curb water and electricity losses, improve financial accountability, restore ageing infrastructure, and make our communities safer. We are intensifying clean-up operations to remove illegal dumping, repair public spaces, and restore the beauty of our communities.

These steps, though challenging, are necessary. Each one brings us closer to a city that works for everyone. Our most significant responsibility is to our residents. We are improving basic services, restoring parks, sports fields, libraries, and heritage spaces, and expanding care for seniors, young people, and vulnerable families. We remain committed to ensuring that informal settlements are safer and that families who have been overlooked finally receive the dignity they deserve. Johannesburg must be a city that protects and uplifts its people.

Our townships and the inner city are the heartbeat of Johannesburg. They are places of hustle, creativity, and hope. We are working to restore order, enforce fair trade practices, clean sidewalks, improve lighting and safety, and revitalise buildings that have fallen into disrepair. These areas are the lifeblood of our economy, and their revival is central to our future. We are also embracing new technology to improve efficiency and stimulate economic growth.

By modernising how people access services, start businesses, and build within the city, we are laying the foundation for new industries, jobs, and opportunities. Johannesburg must not only catch up, but it must also lead. Our strength does not lie solely in buildings; it lies in our people. You are our top priority. This City belongs to all who live in it, work in it, and dream in it.

Together, we will rebuild a Johannesburg that is safe, clean, just, and full of opportunities. We will restore dignity to every street, every neighbourhood, and every household.

This is the city we are building. This is our new tomorrow. Let us make it together.

*Until next time,*

**Johannesburg Executive Mayor Councillor Sello Dada Morero**