

Toilet and shower blocks planned for settlements

NOMSA MAKHUTLE

THE municipality has set aside R15-million to build ablution blocks in eThekweni's crowded informal settlements.

Proper toilets, showers and clothes washing areas are expected to improve the hygiene and standard of living of the city's poor.

Already, hundreds of residents of informal settlements in Clermont have benefited

from the project. Until recently, they had to share a few pit toilets.

Now, thanks to the municipality, they have three new ablution blocks – at 28th Avenue, Regal Avenue, and 17th Avenue.

Municipal departments including Environmental Health, Electricity, Water and Sanitation, Housing and Architecture all contributed to the project.

"The initiative aims to give

people dignity," said local Cllr Nelly Nyanisa, who worked with the residents' committee to get the work done after they had appealed to her for help.

Karamchand Jaggeth, Head of the municipality's Environmental Health Unit (West region), said the community had been involved in the project from the outset because in the end it is they who will have to look after the facilities.

The council provides toilet paper, mops, hosepipes, refuse bins, cleaning materials and disinfectants, but residents manage the facility, and it is their responsibility to make sure it is taken care of.

The ablution blocks will serve as a temporary measure until the people of the area are moved to new houses.

One of the difficulties the municipality is facing in building the blocks involves

securing permission to erect structures on privately-owned land.

Most land in Clermont, for example, is privately owned.

The municipality has appealed to private land owners to allow the council to build blocks.

And environmental health workers are meeting with local councillors, committees, and departments to get the work done.

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New levy mooted in budget

THEMBA NYATHIKAZI

OFFICIALS have included a call for the council's in-principle approval of a development levy in the draft recommendations for the city's 2007/2008 budget.

The levy will enable the city to provide bulk services and infrastructure which will speed up development in the northern, southern and western areas of the municipality.

The levy is needed because the city is predominantly bordered by agricultural land that has little or no services.

To provide bulk services for these areas, including sewerage, electricity, water and roads, will require about R4-billion, which will severely impact on rates and taxes, said Krish Kumar, Deputy City Manager for Treasury.

But a levy, in terms of the Systems Act, and along the lines of what other major cities are doing, is being considered to meet the cost of providing these services.

Spatial development framework plans that will inform the level of service required for these areas are being finalised.

Consultation will take place with interested parties before

the envisaged levy is implemented – probably "in the next financial year", said Kumar.

Apart from conventional sources of funding, the municipality will look at private-public partnerships, other spheres of government, and other financing mechanisms to fund the bulk services, he said.

The municipality will also explore "ring-fencing" development spending and income in these areas, as well as funding development from rates income.

The development of these areas will increase the rates base in the long term.

But the growth of the spatial economy does not occur in a vacuum.

"Pockets of high-output economic zones that are supported with little attention to other areas tend to impede the overall development of the municipality," officials said.

"The answer is to integrate all areas into the greater economy through interventions by the municipality until a significant momentum is achieved, allowing previously marginalised areas to grow organically," they said.

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LOOKING GOOD: Gerard Strydom, the municipality's Head of Regional Centres, and Gopal Maduray, site foreman, look at plans for Umlazi's new Sizakala Customer Service centre

Picture: BONGA MSIMANG

Umlazi customer will be king

DERRICK DLAMINI

A NEW Sizakala Customer Service centre is set to open at the Umlazi Mega City later this year.

It will improve access to municipal services for residents of the area.

A one-stop centre, it is expected to feature a variety of municipal departments ranging from Metro Police, Electricity and Water, as well

as cashiers where residents can pay their municipal bills.

Speaking to the *eZasegagasi* Metro during a visit to the centre construction site, Gerard Strydom the municipality's Head of Regional Centres, said the people of Umlazi can expect better customer service as part of the council's efforts to bring services closer to the people.

"It's the first time that the municipality will be opening

a major customer centre here, and we're looking forward to providing a centre that will be of great benefit to the people of Umlazi.

"The whole Mega City has been a tremendous success and we hope to emulate that," said Strydom, adding he was excited at the rate at which work was progressing. This centre is expected to officially open by August.

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IN BRIEF

A night under the stars

THE Botanic Gardens is hosting a Star Party this evening – a fun, family learning session about the autumn night sky and the world of astronomy.

It starts at 5pm and will include talks about climate change and the mysteries of the night sky.

There will be natural science displays, and an expert will help guests discover constellations.

Tickets cost R40 for adults, R30 for seniors and students, R25 for Friends of the Botanic Gardens and pupils, and children under six enter free.

For more information call 031 309 1170 or e-mail clementm@durban.gov.za .

Traditional beadwork

THE Durban Art Gallery will be hosting traditional Zulu bead-making workshops on 24 and 25 April from 9am until noon.

They will be teaching traditional patterns. This will help people better understand the regional differences in beading colours and designs.

People attending will be able to make up their own designs, and add their own letters and words. Beadwork can be applied to various items, clothes and furniture.

The workshop cost is R40 and all materials will be supplied. Call Phumzile Dlamini on 031 311 2274.

Youth to help shape policy

SCORES of young people are expected to attend a policy symposium at the Durban Exhibition Centre, from 9am to 3pm today.

It aims to convey the significance of policy issues to young people. Talks will cover the establishment of a youth agency, a youth development strategy and how they relate to ward committees.

Event organiser Zami Sithole said: "The symposium offers youth an opportunity to air their views, which will be filtered into the final draft policy."

Rural women: big congress

ABOUT 2 000 delegates are expected to attend the fourth World Congress of Rural Women at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre Complex (ICC) from 23 to 25 April.

The congress will discuss solutions to the problems facing rural women. These include globalisation, trade, gender equality, food security and the affect of public policies on women.

For more information, visit www.4thworldcongressofruralwomen.co.za .

CITY'S BEAUTIES

FINALISTS in the Miss eThekweni Beauty Pageant 2005 bring a bucket load of glamour to the City Hall's steps. The 2007 edition of the competition is now on with the preliminary selections set to take place at the Playhouse next month. The finals will be held at the same venue on 21 July. For details call Wiseman Gabela on 083 7497 480

Picture: SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO



Roadblock blitz

FINOLA QUARSINGH

METRO Police roadblocks over the Easter holiday led to the arrest of 138 drunken drivers.

One illegal firearm and a stolen motor vehicle were recovered and suspects arrested during the roadblocks.

Also over the holidays, a number of liquor outlets were raided and one Ecstasy tablet and 2.7g of dagga were seized.

Two people were arrested at a Durban nightclub and charged with possession and selling of illegal drugs.

During a raid on another nightclub, two Mandrax tablets were discovered and

an arrest was made.

Several shebeens were raided and three taverns in Umlazi were closed down for allegedly selling liquor without licences and three people were arrested and charged.

About 90 cases of alcohol worth R9 000 were confiscated during the raids.

Eight vehicles, including minibus taxis, were impounded for, among other things, being unlicensed or unroadworthy.

□ The Metro Police recently met the Liquor Board in an effort to strengthen their relationship and ensure the better enforcement of the Liquor Act.