



a world class African city

City of Johannesburg  
Group Communications and Tourism

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I must at the very outset say that public participation in local government is critical as it allows communities to recognise their own worth regarding the key role they can play to make a difference in their communities. Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, government has realised the importance of deepening democracy through various means and encouraging an active citizenry especially at local government level where municipalities are closest to the people they serve.

Our key objective is to involve residents in the affairs of council as we roll out projects and initiatives to drive economic growth, create jobs, reduce poverty, attract investment and ensure a satisfactory level of service delivery amongst other things. The future development of Johannesburg cannot be done by technical experts or officials without the communities for which these developments are intended that is why the City compiles an integrated development plan for a period of five years which is reviewed annually.

To put things into perspective, now that council has been constituted following the 2016 Local Government Elections and the induction of councillors is over the focus now shifts to another important aspect that of the formation of ward committees. It is my responsibility as the Speaker of Council to call for the establishment of ward committees throughout Johannesburg. The terms of office of ward committees are aligned to that of municipal councils which is five years and the municipality is required as soon as possible after the results of the elections have been declared to arrange ward meetings in order for interest groups in the ward to be identified and subsequently for ward committees to be elected.

A ward committee is a structure created to assist the democratically elected representative of a ward to carry out his or her mandate. It has no legal persona but serves as an advisory committee to support the ward councillor. Ward committee elections to elect new members will be held throughout Johannesburg from Saturday 28 January 2017 to Saturday 11 February 2017 which may be several months away however we are starting with an extensive awareness campaign that is coupled to civic education about the establishment and role of ward committees so that we create the opportunity for interested residents to participate. Municipalities are prone to service delivery protests much like institutions of higher education are now experiencing a fees must fall campaign. There has to be an avenue for dialogue and constant engagement before municipalities can implement so that what is implemented is what communities want rather than what we the Council think they want hence the need to raise awareness and involve them at the very beginning of establishing ward committees.



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There are certain requirements to be met to become eligible as a candidate by prospective candidates that includes amongst other things, being of a sound mind, not being in arrears for more than three months with your municipal account and must be a registered voter of the ward. Much like the municipal elections, ward committee elections are held under the same format led by the IEC. The process will be explained to you shortly by the project leader in more detail.

Nevertheless, Johannesburg has 135 wards and each ward has to elect ten members to represent various portfolios in a ward committee led by the ward councillor as the chairperson of one of the portfolios which are:

- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Transport
- ◆ Public Safety (JMPD, EMS)
- ◆ Finance and Economic Development
- ◆ Infrastructure and Services (City Power, Joburg Water, Pikitup)
- ◆ Community Development 1 (Sports, Culture and Youth)
- ◆ Community Development 2 (Women, Faith Based Groups, CBO and NGO's)
- ◆ Environment
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Development Planning and Urban Management

This fairly represents the different categories of work that we must deliver on and councillors have the responsibility of representing their constituents with the help of the ward committee members. So over the coming weeks we trust that you as the media will also help us to keep this alive in the minds of residents.