



Joburg celebrates the 2025 World Cities Day: Building people-centred smart cities

The City will join the global community tomorrow, 31 October 2025, to celebrate World Cities Day. This year's theme, "**People-Centred Smart Cities**", calls for technology and innovation that improve urban life while prioritising inclusivity, accessibility, and equity.

Why this matters for Johannesburg

Cities are drivers of economic growth, but also account for more than 70% global greenhouse gas emissions. With over 5.5 million residents, Johannesburg is South Africa's economic powerhouse, contributing at least 16% of South Africa's GDP. As urbanisation accelerates, the challenge is clear: how do we make Joburg smarter, greener, and more liveable for all?

Driving Transformation Through Development Planning

The City's Development Planning Department is spearheading and is involved in initiatives that align with this year's theme:

- **Smart City Strategy Renewal**
Expanding public Wi-Fi, rolling out fibre networks, and introducing data-driven platforms to enhance service delivery and citizen engagement.
- **Green Infrastructure for Climate Resilience**
Planting 200,000 trees and restoring urban forests to combat heat islands and flooding, creating healthier neighbourhoods.
- **Urban Development Frameworks**
Upgrading public spaces in the Randburg CBD and at Main Reef, Roodepoort, to foster safety, economic activity and social inclusion.
- **Infrastructure Renewal**
Investing R2.8 billion over three years to repair roads, bridges, and stormwater systems for improved mobility and resilience against flooding.
- **Students re-inventing the City**
International and local students participating in the C40 Cities competition hosted by Joburg to reimagine Kliptown as a thriving, resilient urban space.
- **Inclusive economy**- collaborating with community and business forums to develop new spatial plans and economic strategies for declining industrial nodes adjacent to the city's densest township, Alexandra.

Global Leadership: Urban 20 and G20

The City of Johannesburg recently co-hosted the Urban 20 Mayors' Summit with Tshwane in September, bringing together leaders from major G20 cities to discuss economic opportunities, climate action, social inclusion, and digital innovation. This summit positioned Joburg as a key voice in shaping global urban policy.

Next month, the City will host the **G20 Leaders' Summit** on 22 & 23 November - the first on African soil, under the theme: "**Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability**". This historic event underscores Johannesburg's role in driving global conversations on inclusive growth, climate resilience, and sustainable financing.

World Cities Day is not just a celebration; it's a reminder that better cities create better lives. As Johannesburg steps onto the global stage, we invite residents, businesses, and partners to join us in building a City that is smart, green, and inclusive.

Issued by:
Cllr Eunice Mgcina
MMC for Development Planning
City of Joburg