



a world class African city

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MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Johannesburg commits to safeguarding public records and improving access to Town Planning services

The City of Johannesburg is taking decisive action to enhance public access to essential building plans and town planning records, following the unfortunate closure of the Metro Centre due to structural defects identified in a technical report. The safety of our residents and employees remains our top priority, and we are fully committed to resolving these challenges swiftly and effectively.

The City is working with National Treasury to appoint a Transactional Advisor for the redevelopment of the Metro Centre. In this regard, National Treasury has commenced with the SCM processes, and they should be finalised by the end of June 2025.

The redevelopment of the Metro Centre precinct will ensure that the City moves away from renting office accommodation from private sector but utilises its own refurbished offices that will be fit for purpose.

In light of the closure, the Development Planning Department faced significant challenges, as millions of physical records crucial for property development, compliance, and legal processes were temporarily locked within the premises. To ensure continuity of service, we have implemented immediate and long-term strategies designed to address these access issues while safeguarding vital public records.

Current Measures:

Recognising the urgency of the situation, the Development Planning Department received approval for limited daily access to the Metro Centre. Staff members are now allocated two hours each weekday to retrieve files, thereby assisting residents seeking access to building plans and town planning documents. However, logistical difficulties and limited workforce have hampered this process, leading to backlogs in retrieval and proper filing efforts.

Security at Metro Centre

In order to ensure that the Metro Centre is not vandalised, we had to reinforce our security measures around the building. We have 35 armed security guards that are currently manning the building per 12-hour shift for 24 hours.

We have also installed a perimeter fence around the building to limit easy access into the metro centre.

Relocation of the Development Planning Department

The Development Planning Department is relocating to new offices in Newtown. This move is part of the City's commitment to improving public access, enhancing service delivery, and increasing operational efficiency.

Services to the public will be available from 25 June 2025.

Interventions Underway:

To tackle these problems and enhance public access to important records, the City has initiated a two-pronged approach:

1. Increased Capacity:

Development Planning Department is mobilising additional staff from Development Planning offices across the City to support Record Management efforts. This increased capacity will facilitate the efficient retrieval and filing of records from the Metro Link, allowing us to better serve our residents.

2. Digitisation Project:

In partnership with the Group Information and Communication Technology (GICT) department, the City Development Planning Department is prioritising the urgent appointment of a service provider to:

- Scan and digitise all building plans and town planning records.
- Develop a secure digital platform for remote public access to these records.
- Move physical records to the Gauteng Provincial Archives in compliance with legal requirements once the digitisation project is complete.

The procurement process for the service provider is currently underway and is expected to be finalised by the end of July 2025.

Commitment to Transparency:

The City of Johannesburg is dedicated to modernising service delivery and enhancing transparency in its operations. We recognise the importance of the public's right to access development planning information and are implementing these interventions to ensure that access is maintained, even amid temporary operational constraints.

The City appreciates the patience exhibited by the residents during this challenging time and is committed to restoring full functionality and accessibility to crucial services as swiftly as possible.

ENDS

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