



a world class African city

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For immediate release  
To: All Media  
01 April 2026

## JDA MARKS 25 YEARS OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION: FROM A FRAGMENTED PAST TO A RENEWED, RESILIENT CITY



The [Johannesburg Development Agency](#) (JDA), the infrastructure development arm of the City of Johannesburg, proudly commemorates its 25th anniversary under the theme “25 Years of Urban Transformation.”

This milestone marks a quarter-century of strategic city-building—transforming Johannesburg from a city shaped by fragmented planning and uneven development into one increasingly defined by connected, inclusive, and people-centred urban spaces.

As the JDA reflects on its 25-year journey, it also celebrates the achievements of its 24th year of operation—a year that demonstrated how focused infrastructure investment continues to reshape the city’s spatial form, unlock opportunity, and improve everyday life for residents.

### Building a better city

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## **From Neglect to Dignity: Transforming Living Conditions**

Twenty-five years ago, many Johannesburg neighbourhoods were characterised by deteriorating infrastructure, unsafe public spaces, and limited access to basic services. Today, the JDA's precinct-based approach is actively reversing this legacy.

Through integrated infrastructure delivery, the Agency continues to create safer, more accessible, and dignified urban environments—particularly in communities that were historically underserved.

Projects such as the [Elias Motsoaledi Gravel Roads Project](#) reflect this transformation in action. What were once marginalised spaces are being reshaped into functional neighbourhoods with improved public areas, better access to services, and enhanced liveability, directly contributing to quality-of-life improvements for residents.

## **Revitalising the City's Heritage While Rebuilding Its Future**

Urban transformation is not only about new development—it is also about restoring the city's civic heart. Over 25 years, the JDA has played a critical role in preventing the decline of key public assets and reimagining them for contemporary use.

The renovation of the [Johannesburg City Library](#) is a powerful symbol of this philosophy. By restoring this landmark institution, the JDA is ensuring that Johannesburg's heritage infrastructure continues to serve as a vibrant, accessible centre for learning, culture, and social connection—bridging the city's past with its future.

## **Building Modern Infrastructure for a Growing City**

Johannesburg's evolution into a modern African metropolis demands infrastructure that can meet the pressures of growth, climate change, and urban complexity. In its 24th year, the JDA advanced projects that strengthen the city's capacity to respond to these challenges.

The development of facilities such as the [Central Fire Station](#) exemplifies how new infrastructure investment directly enhances service delivery, public safety, and urban resilience. These projects are not isolated interventions—they are part of a broader vision to future-proof the city and improve how residents experience municipal services every day.

## **Renewing Community Assets Through Thoughtful Upgrading**

Urban regeneration is as much about renewing existing assets as it is about constructing new ones. Over the past year, the JDA has continued to modernise vital community infrastructure to meet contemporary standards and community needs.

The revitalisation of the [Chris Hani Sports Complex](#) demonstrates how targeted upgrades can reinvigorate public facilities—creating inclusive spaces that promote health, recreation, youth development, and social cohesion, while restoring community pride in shared assets.

## **Infrastructure as an Engine for Economic Opportunity**

From its inception, the JDA has understood infrastructure as a powerful catalyst for economic inclusion. Over 25 years, this approach has helped stimulate local economies, create employment, and support small businesses across the city.

The rollout of [Rea Vaya Phase 1C](#) during the Agency's 24th year is a clear example of this impact. Beyond improving mobility, the project has empowered local communities through job creation, SMME participation, and the meaningful integration of taxi operators into the formal public transport system. This model of development ensures that economic benefits are embedded within the communities where infrastructure is delivered.

## **Greener, More Sustainable Urban Spaces**

As Johannesburg grapples with environmental pressures, sustainability has become central to the JDA's work. Over the years, the Agency has increasingly embedded green infrastructure and environmentally responsible design into its projects.

Initiatives such as [Drieziek Recreation Park](#) illustrate this shift—transforming underutilised land into high-quality green public spaces that improve environmental conditions while offering residents safe, recreational amenities. These projects signal a move toward a more climate-resilient and liveable city.

## **A Legacy of Transformation, A Commitment to the Next 25 Years**

As the JDA marks 25 years of operation, the progress achieved in its most recent year stands as a testament to the Agency's enduring mandate: to transform Johannesburg through strategic, inclusive infrastructure development.

What was once a city marked by spatial inequality and neglected public spaces is increasingly becoming a city of renewed precincts, revitalised institutions, and growing opportunity.

This anniversary is not only a celebration of past achievements—it is a reaffirmation of purpose. The JDA remains committed to building infrastructure that transforms lives, strengthens communities, and delivers a more inclusive, connected, and resilient Johannesburg for generations to come.

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