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MEDIA RELEASE

To: News Editors
From: Kgamanyane Maphologela
Director: Communications & Stakeholder Management
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City of Johannesburg launches Pensioners Legacy and Relief campaign to support seniors and safeguard family homes

The City of Johannesburg's Group Finance Department has launched its Pensioners Legacy and Relief Campaign, a customer education initiative aimed at helping senior citizens access property-rates relief while supporting families to protect their homes and manage municipal affairs responsibly.

The campaign coincides with Older Persons Week (26 September – 2 October 2026) and the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October 2026, placing the needs of Johannesburg's senior citizens firmly in focus.

The initiative brings together two important areas of support: practical information on property-rates rebates available to qualifying pensioners, and guidance for families on keeping municipal records up to date and managing municipal accounts when a property owner passes away.

Automatic extension brings relief to existing pensioner beneficiaries

To reduce the administrative burden on older homeowners, the City has automatically extended property-rates rebates for existing approved pensioner beneficiaries until 30 June 2027.

This means pensioners whose rebates have already been approved do not need to re-apply to retain their benefits for the remainder of the current General Valuation Roll (GVR2023) cycle, subject to the applicable policy requirements.

During the 2025/26 financial year, the City provided approximately R329.8 million in property-rates rebates to 38 308 pensioner beneficiaries.

The automatic extension will help ensure continuity of this important support while reducing unnecessary paperwork and visits to City offices for existing approved beneficiaries.

“Our senior citizens have spent decades contributing to their communities and to the development of Johannesburg. This campaign is about making municipal processes easier to understand and easier to navigate,” said Kgamanyane Maphologela, Director: Communications & Stakeholder Management in Group Finance.

“We want to reduce unnecessary administrative pressure on our pensioners while helping families understand the steps they need to take to protect their homes and keep municipal affairs in order.”

Understanding the property-rates relief available

The City’s property-rates framework provides various forms of relief to qualifying residential property owners.

Every qualifying residential property receives an exclusion on the first R300 000 of its market value for property-rates purposes. This consists of the statutory R15 000 exclusion provided for under the Municipal Property Rates Act (MPRA) and an additional R285 000 City-funded exclusion.

For qualifying pensioners, additional rebates apply as follows:

Pensioners aged 60 to 69

- Gross monthly household income below R13 519: a 100% rates rebate on qualifying properties valued up to R1.5 million.
- Gross monthly household income between R13 519 and R23 172: a 50% rates rebate on qualifying properties valued up to R1.5 million.
- Recipients of a qualifying social grant may also qualify for 100% relief, subject to the applicable policy requirements.

Pensioners aged 70 and older

- Qualifying pensioners may receive a 100% rates rebate on properties valued up to R2 million, regardless of monthly income, subject to the applicable policy requirements.

Existing approved pensioner beneficiaries covered by the automatic extension do not need to submit new applications.

However, residents who have recently turned 60, have newly become eligible, or have never previously applied must submit an application for consideration.

Applicants must be the registered owners of the property and ordinarily reside at the property as their primary residence. The pensioner rebate applies to one qualifying property per applicant, in accordance with the City’s Rates Policy.

Get the application right the first time

The City encourages new applicants, particularly pensioners aged 60 to 69, to carefully check their applications before submission to avoid unnecessary delays or rejection.

Applicants should ensure that:

1. Gross monthly income is clearly stated on the application form. Supporting documents such as bank statements or SASSA documentation do not replace the requirement to declare the income amount on the form. City officials cannot complete this declaration on behalf of an applicant.
2. The application form is signed by the registered property owner.
3. A certified copy of the applicant's South African identity document is attached, with the certification not older than three months.
4. Where a property is jointly owned, the required supporting income documentation and declarations for all relevant co-owners are provided.
5. The municipal account complies with the applicable requirements relating to account status, payment arrangements or formally lodged billing disputes.

Protecting the family home and legacy

A central pillar of the Pensioners Legacy and Relief Campaign focuses on an issue affecting many Johannesburg families: what happens to a property and its municipal account when an owner passes away.

The City is reminding residents that a municipal account is not proof of legal ownership of a property. Similarly, changing the name associated with a municipal account does not, on its own, transfer ownership of the property.

"A family home often represents decades of sacrifice and is an important part of the legacy parents leave to their children. But when a property owner passes away, uncertainty about the administrative and legal processes can create serious complications for families," Maphologela said.

"The deceased estate must be administered through the appropriate legal process involving the Master of the High Court. The City does not determine inheritance or ownership, but our responsibility is to help families understand how the municipal account should be managed while the estate process is being finalised."

Families are encouraged to notify the City when a registered property owner passes away and to seek assistance as early as possible.

Keeping the municipal account properly managed during the administration of an estate can help prevent avoidable debt from accumulating and reduce complications when the property is eventually transferred to the lawful beneficiary or purchaser.

Where to get assistance

New pensioner applicants and families requiring assistance can use the following official City channels:

- **Email:** Request or submit pensioner rebate application forms via ratescomments@joburg.org.za
- **In person:** Visit a City of Johannesburg Customer Service Centre (CSC) for general municipal-account assistance.
- **Online:** Pensioner rebate information and application forms are available on the City of Johannesburg website under the Property Rates and Rebates section.
- **Deceased estates:** For guidance on deceased estate matters, families can visit the Legal Department, 1st Floor at Thuso House, 61 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein.

The City encourages pensioners and their families to use the campaign as an opportunity to ensure that their municipal records, rebate applications and property-related documentation are in order.

“Our message to senior citizens is simple: you have contributed to Johannesburg for many years, and we want to make it easier for you to access the municipal relief available to you. At the same time, we encourage families to have the necessary conversations and put their property affairs in order so that the family home remains an asset rather than becoming an administrative burden for the next generation,” Maphologela concluded.

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