



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG, COUNCILLOR DADA MORERO

Sod-Turning Ceremony of Nape Street/inDrive Park, Naledi, Soweto Tuesday, 27 October 2026

Programme Director, Mr Sakhile Maphumulo;
Member of the Mayoral Committee for Community Development, Councillor Thapelo Amad; Ward Councillor, Councillor Lazarus Mmota;
inDrive Country Representative, Mr Ashif Black, and the inDrive delegation;
Managing Director of Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo, Mr Thanduxolo Mendrew,
Region D Director, Mr Justice Ngalonkulu,
Principals, educators, school governing bodies and learners;
Contractors and local business representatives;
Community leaders and residents of Naledi;
Members of the media;
Distinguished guests

Good morning.

For too long, townships like Naledi were left with dust where there should have been grass, and bare streets where there should have been shade. That green divide was designed, and we must close it by design. The quality of public spaces in Johannesburg must not be determined by the neighbourhood in which a person lives. Today we take another step towards closing that divide.

Soweto has already shown what is possible. Over the years, trees, green corridors, and improved public spaces have changed the face of this township, and residents, public institutions, and committed partners have built that change together. Environmental degradation affects all of us, and no single sphere of society can reverse it alone. Government brings its mandate and oversight, business brings resources and expertise, and residents bring local knowledge and daily care. This is why our Climate Action Plan commits Johannesburg to becoming a net-zero, climate-resilient city by 2050.

For this City, climate action is a matter of social justice. It cannot be separated from the fight against poverty and inequality, and communities left behind must feel it first. Nape Street Park is built on exactly that kind of partnership. The park will be developed in 3 phases, with completion targeted for July 2028. Phase 1, valued at approximately R6.4 million, begins now. Residents will gain a jogging track, a shaded outdoor gym, playgrounds, a full-size soccer field, a junior multi-court, and a bandstand and amphitheatre for community gatherings.

Every tree we plant here and every green space we protect also makes Naledi more resilient to a changing climate, bringing shade, cleaner surroundings and a healthier environment to families who have waited too long for them. I have also asked the design team to consider a big screen near the spectator area, so that this becomes a true People's Park, where residents gather not only for sport but to socialise and celebrate.

We are doing this in partnership with inDrive, and I thank them for their investment and commitment to maintaining and securing the park beyond construction. But let me be clear about where responsibility lies. JCPZ remains the custodian of this park, and the City remains accountable to the residents of Naledi. Partnerships strengthen what government can do; they do not replace it. Private generosity must never excuse public absence. The benefits of this project must reach this community from the first day of construction.

To the contractors: use local labour and local businesses wherever possible, follow fair procurement and recruitment processes, be honest about the scale of opportunities, and deliver work of the highest standard, on time. The residents of Naledi will be watching, and so will this administration. This park is about more than recreation. It is about giving young people a constructive place to spend their time, away from substance abuse and crime. And it must be safe for everyone. To the boys and young men of Naledi: the girls and young women who use this park have the same right to every field, court and path. Respect their boundaries. Never harass, intimidate or exclude them. Every girl must be able to enjoy this park without fear.

To corporate South Africa: follow this example. Johannesburg has committed to cutting its carbon emissions by 25% by 2030. We cannot reach that target without you. Invest in greening this city where the need is greatest. To the residents of Naledi: this park is yours, and you must protect it. Do not allow it to be vandalised, stripped or used for illegal dumping. Guard its trees and equipment as you would your own home, and report damage and threatening behaviour without delay. Government can build a park, but only a community can keep it alive.

Government must deliver, our partners must honour their commitments, and our communities must protect the public assets they depend on. That is the shared responsibility we want to strengthen across Johannesburg. Programme Director, our

vision is a Johannesburg in which every neighbourhood has spaces that bring people together, and every child has room to play. Let this park be a place where girls play freely and safely, where boys discover their talent, and where families spend an afternoon together in peace.

The soil has been turned. Now the work of delivery begins.

I thank you.