



2026 | STATE OF THE MUNICIPALITY ADDRESS



MAYOR: CLLR T.D MAMANYOHA

MAATLA GO SETSHABA

#SOMA2026



**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MAYOR OF GREATER LETABA
MUNICIPALITY CLLR MAMANYOHA T. D ON THE OCCASION OF
THE STATE OF THE MUNICIPAL ADDRESS (SOMA) AT LETABA
TVET COLLEGE, MODJADJI CAMPUS ON 03 JUNE 2026**

Madam Speaker

The whip of council

Maapara nkwe

Executive Committee members

MPAC chairperson

Chairpersons of council committees

Councillors

Municipal manager and your entourage

Officials from sister municipalities and organs of state

Business community

Financial Banks

Media houses

Security companies

Community members and stakeholders

Ward committee members

CDWs

The great and the good

Mayor's special guests

Entertainment industry

Friends, Comrades, and compatriots

All protocols observed.



We have planned to convene this watershed confluence of our municipality purposely to mirror the landscape we have traversed since 2021 community elections hitherto. Our term of office as councillors is winding down. Time flies. The president of the country has already announced the 04th of November 2026 as the factual date for the incoming local government elections.

Conversely, today we congregate a week after the approval of the 2026/2027 budget by the municipal council. We have converged here in a crucial juncture which will leave our footprints on the sands of time. We are leaving behind a legacy that will outlive our existence on planet earth. This is our last chance of being together as the 2021 collective leadership of the municipality to dissect the budget. What will be ensued from here will be fond memories we have cherished together and nostalgia.

Political leadership is not immortal. Otherwise, there would be no need for democracy and regular elections. Our tenure was strictly five years. Every year, since our advent in 2021, we have had a budget to dispense. We have interacted with our people. We have touched many lives. We have travelled the length and breadth of this municipality and we have been to far-flung villages of this municipality.

We have seen squalor, poverty and destitute and we have rolled up our sleeves to push back the frontiers of poverty. We have left indelible mark. Our term of office has become grist to the mill. Of course, we have also biologically grown, matured and intellectually sophisticated.

In 2021, upon coming in office, we entered into a contract with our people. We knew that communities expected us to provide accessible, high-quality basic services, maintain local infrastructure, foster economic





growth, and ensure transparent governance. It is a well-known fact that municipalities are the closest sphere of government to the people, and therefore residents rely on municipalities for their daily quality of life.

Basically, our purview was to realize and administer provision of services whilst our people were anticipated to pay for the services and abide by the rule of law. We have always understood that this moment will come for us to be held accountable on the progress we have accomplished since then. We have done our best bit by bit and piece by piece. “Bietjie bietjie maak meer”.

The terrain we treaded since 2021 was not an easy walk in the park. Our municipal council comprised political formations across political spectrum. However, our political beliefs never took precedence over the expectations of our communities. Providing political leadership in a complex milieu, tend to make us unpopular in the immediate term, whereas the coming generations will cherish our endeavours for years to come.

Greater Letaba municipality is not an isolated island but has always been swayed by global and domestic dimensions. The global economy dictates municipal operations by driving local tax revenues, shaping the demand for basic services, and determining the feasibility of infrastructure projects. When the global market thrives, municipalities enjoy expanded budgets to improve local infrastructure, but economic downturns lead to reduced fiscal capacity and increased localized poverty.

Municipalities serve as the foundational tier of public administration, acting as the government sphere closest to the public. Their primary role is to deliver basic services such as water, sanitation, waste



management, and road maintenance while driving local economic development, regulating land use, and safeguarding community well-being.

Municipal operations are highly dependent on global commodity prices such as oil and diesel. Any spikes in global inflation directly increase the costs of running operations in the municipality. Global economic trends transcribe the profitability of local industries. When local businesses suffer from global recessions or supply chain disruptions, municipal tax revenues decline, which is directly restricting operational budgets.

International immigration is another area of hardships for our municipality. We have been obliged to stretch the operational capacities to provide services to a moving target. An expanding population accelerates the wear-and-tear on water, electricity, and waste management infrastructure. If municipal revenue systems and billing networks fail to update, this leads to service delivery backlogs and budget shortfalls.

We utilize socioeconomic, demographic, and financial data to guide infrastructure development, allocate funds to basic services such as water, electricity, waste, and determine tariff increases. This evidence-based approach ensures that we fulfil community needs and align with the legally mandated Integrated Development Plans (IDP).

It is increasingly becoming inevitable for our municipality to adopt “think globally, act locally” approach. That is, we ought to consider the wide-ranging impacts of other choices on the entire world, while taking practical, manageable action in our own immediate communities. It means understanding widespread global social issues and addressing



them with solutions designed specifically for the local population's needs and capabilities.

Our political epoch was conspicuously marked by the inability of state-owned enterprises like Eskom to consistently supply electricity, hence loadshedding, and Transnet to operate the freight rail and port networks efficiently has crippled production. This has forced energy-intensive sectors like manufacturing, mining, and agriculture to cut jobs or stall expansion.

We have witnessed successive years of high interest rates, rising inflation, and escalating fuel costs which squeezed consumer disposable income. This has compelled local businesses and households to cut non-essential spending and lay off staff which severely impacted domestic services like retail and private domestic work.

Albeit our term of office was not practically in the eye of the storm of COVID 19, however, in essence we ran the gauntlet of the legacy of the COVID 19 epidemic. The COVID 19 aftermath led to the severe economic contractions and the lockdown restrictions implemented during the pandemic caused a long-lasting shock to labour demand. Many firms accelerated automation, restructured operations, or simply closed down, creating an employment gap from which the country has struggled to recover.

In 2021, we landed running. This implies that we started to work with immediate energy, enthusiasm, and productivity, requiring no warm-up. There was no learning curve. It was an epic transition. We were already prepared and knew exactly what needed to be done. We maintained impressive performance and delivered results from day one. We stayed the course by navigating through the challenges. We allayed the fears





which come as results of transition among the employees. We were never presumptuous, but humble.

We swiftly dived into the insight of the municipality's inner workings, including the role the budget plays in decision making. We were transparent about the municipality's financial health, including current revenue and reserves. We were honest about exactly where the municipality stood, and we choreographed stakes involved in setting clear goals. We comprehended our prime function.

Moreover, we built more authentic relationships with employees, we bolstered the morale, listened to feedback and suggestions, especially from frontline employees. We replaced ambiguity with deliberate action, empathy, and transparency. We navigated a downturn successfully, prioritize constant communication, and we made decisive and objective cuts, protected core goals and talent, and maintained operational agility.

We hold a strong conviction that the political leadership which will succeed us after the incoming community elections, will be bequeathed with a phenomenally successful municipality. We have assembled programs and machinery which are poised to propel service delivery to the heights for posterities to come.

We have strived our utmost to provide the incoming leadership with essential orientation regarding the municipality's financial health, service delivery status, capital programs, and outstanding risks. We are equally mindful of the fact that, transition is crucial governance designed to ensure leadership continuity, institutional memory, and accountability. We yearn for a transition which will be seamless with minimum services delivery disruptions.



Indisputably, the experience we have accumulated in the past five years cannot be wished away and will certainly stand us in good stead in our future industrious undertaking. Similarly, our respective political parties have invested a lot in us and will undoubtedly reap rewards without any qualms.

Service delivery enhancement in municipalities hinges around the quality and the calibre of people who work as employees in municipalities. Without dedicated and committed employees who keep the system of local government moving, municipalities would be a hollow shell without the capacity to deliver basic services to our people. Empowering municipal employees with the skills to meet the communities' growing expectations is paramount. They must possess the competencies to thrive in the face of evolving demands. The gospel truth is that working for a municipality is not a welfare case.

Municipalities may have strategic and visionary political leadership, but flounder to provide quality services to our people if the employees are lackadaisical and do not possess the necessary prerequisites. Since the inception of local government in South Africa, we have witnessed instances where capable councillors are ousted on grounds of area issues that are ascribed to the weaklings of the municipal employees.

In building a professional local government workforce, we must begin by acknowledging that the new system of local public administration and human resources requires an efficient, effective, and transparent local public administration that conforms to values and principles of public administration as enshrined in section 195 of the Constitution of the RSA.





Madam Speaker, before we delve deeper, I wish to indicate that today we have a special guest in our midst in the person of Merlu Masipa and I would like to invite Merlu to come over and stand next to me.

Madam Speaker, may I reminiscence your memory about Merlu Masipa who hails from Thakagalane village. You and I met Merlu and others in 2022 to congratulate them on their Grade 12 outstanding performance at the Fairview hotel in Tzaneen.

Ensued to that eventful moment, I took the initiative of adopting Merlu to ensure that her tertiary education is financially taken care of. I have financially supported her out of own volition and compassion. Today as I speak, Merlu has obtained an Honours degree in Accounting and is currently employed by the Standard Bank. What a wonderful moment!

I embraced and adopted Merlu through my office project called "Mayor's registration drive." The main goal of this project is to ensure that annually in January, I help needy learners to register at high institutions of learning.

Since 2021 to date, I have paid registration fees for more than 120 learners. This project is not budgeted for in the coffers of the municipality. It is out of my pocket. I took a conscious decision that I would rather decline indulging myself in luxuries, instead focus on becoming a hope for the hopeless.

I was prepared to live on a shoestring budget to make these learners to have a better future. Merlu, you have made us proud, and we would like to thank you wholeheartedly for honouring our invite. You are a shining star. You may resume your seat. Thank you.

We rejoice in helping others to achieve their ideals. We do not jubilate or delight in other people's anguish and misery. As leaders, we cannot bury



our head in the sand or look away when other people are struggling to make ends meet.

Madam Speaker, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Here we elucidate the Mayor's Intervention Programme since 2021:

21 students were funded through the Mayor's Bursary. These are mainly academically deserving learners and from poor background. 85 wheelchairs have been distributed. 05 houses have been constructed and some refurbished. 54 first and returning students have been paid for their registration fees.

At least 1800 food hampers have been handed over to impoverished households. More than 350 school uniforms were handed over to deserving learners. Best performing learners in Grade 12 final results have been awarded more than 10 laptops and tablets.

Donations of free school shoes and uniforms are transformative for disadvantaged learners. They boost self-esteem, prevent social stigma, ensure physical comfort, and remove barriers to regular attendance. For many low-income families, these basic necessities are financially out of reach.

Wearing proper, clean clothing and shoes provides learners with a profound sense of dignity, making them feel equal to their peers. Learners are often teased for wearing worn-out shoes or clothes which have seen many days. A complete uniform shields learners from this stigma.

Many learners miss class because their families cannot afford the mandated dress code. Walking long distances to school without proper footwear is painful and poses health risks. Sturdy shoes protect children from foot injuries and weather elements.





Madam Speaker, our municipal council just approved budget for 2026/2027 budget year. It is a standard rule that approval of the municipal budget is preceded and supplemented by painstaking preparations and intense consultation. Our budget is informed by fiscal management reform agenda which focused on key game changers. These game-changers include ensuring that municipal budget is underpinned by revenue management which is streamlined, assets are managed efficiently, supply chain management processes are adhered to, mSCOA is implemented correctly and that audit findings are resolved.

We approved our 2026/2027 budget cognizant of the fact that South Africa's economy is expected to grow by 1.2 per cent in 2025/26. Real GDP growth is forecast to strengthen, averaging 1.8 per cent over the medium-term, supported by a revival in investment as new infrastructure allocations take effect and reform implementation builds.

Consumer inflation is projected to average 3.3 per cent in 2025/26 and 3.7 per cent in 2026/27. In the short term, reducing the inflation target to 3 per cent will result in more cuts in interest rates than would be the case under a 4.5 per cent target. Over a time, a lower target will decrease inflation and inflation expectations, creating the space for permanently lower interest rates, which will support household spending and investment boosting economic growth and job creation.

The lower inflation will support higher levels of real economic growth. South Africa's inflation target will be more in line with its trading partners and peer economies, making the economy more competitive. Household spending and private investment will soar due to higher real disposable income and lower borrowing costs.



It is common knowledge that economic contractions weigh heavily on families' ability to pay municipal accounts. Such economic conditions have positioned overwhelming burden on municipal own revenues, and therefore municipal own revenue generation gets adversely affected.

Most importantly, the prudent strategy to fiscal consolidation should encompass expenditure restraint and moderate revenue increases. We all know that resources are limited, but our wants are endless, and that we are forced to make choices. These are basic tenets of economics, and we should try our best not to antagonise them, unless we get hurt. The same analogy applies to the municipal budget, regardless of the fact that we are a government. A budget will never be superfluous or grow on trees.

For every budget year since 2021, we have conducted public participation ere approval of the budget. Public participation is legislated and mandatory for municipalities in South Africa. We never treated public participation as mundane. We knew that public participation is a potent weapon in the hands of our people. We used public participation to impart to our people that resources are always scarce against the abound needs.

Moreover, public participation is a corner stone of a direct democracy where people decide what they want as averse to ramming projects down their throat which ultimately become white elephants due to lack of ownership or buy-in from communities.

By and large, we employed public participation wittingly or unwittingly to allow our people to collaborate in the opportunity cost. Opportunity cost contends that resources are limited and choosing one option means sacrificing the ability to pursue other opportunities. It is a foundational



concept in economics which we have applied to measure the true decisions. Of course, in some instances we have used scientific data and numbers to arrive at certain decisions.

Madam Speaker, the total revenue budget including all operational and capital grants for 2026/2027 is estimated to be R608 735 000 which decreased by R68 737 592 as compared to R677 473 240 of 2025/2026 adjustment budget. The decrease was due to a reduction in equitable shares allocated to the municipality, lesser MIG grant allocation and that the municipality is not allocated any disaster management grant and energy efficiency grant for 2026/2027.

This budget curtailment requires a combination of strict financial controls, aggressive revenue enhancement, and operational restructuring. Our municipality must prioritize essential services, eliminate wasteful spending, and utilize national frameworks to navigate fiscal distress.

We must ensure that all planned expenditures are backed by realistically anticipated revenue, as required by Section 18 of the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA). We need to aggressively continue to classify and stop irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditures. We must strengthen internal controls and supply chain management to prevent financial mismanagement.

Concisely, the revenue streams of the municipality are composed of the following: property rates, electricity revenue, refuse removal, interest on outstanding debtors, rental of facilities, fines, licence and permits, agency fees and grants.

It is an established practice that municipalities must raise revenue by optimizing their existing tax bases, improving billing accuracy, and



leveraging innovative land-value capture mechanisms. Success relies on enforcing a culture of payment through reliable service delivery rather than simply raising tariffs.

As regards to property rates, we have managed to conduct regular, accurate property valuations to ensure commercial and residential properties are taxed at their actual market value. We have sustainably raised property rates revenue by updating General Valuation Rolls to reflect true market values, implementing targeted annual rate escalations, and broadening the tax base through audits of unrecorded properties.

We are glad to announce that property rates increased by R2.9 million from R25.4 million to R28.3 million for 2026/2027 budget year. However, we will continue to implement continuous supplementary valuations to capture building additions, rezonings, and new sub-divisions as soon as they are completed.

Municipalities should never capitulate to any contrary forces over the idea of transforming informal settlements and un-surveyed land into formal townships, bringing previously untaxed plots onto the official valuation roll. On the other hand, municipalities must implement punitive rates on derelict buildings or vacant land to discourage speculation and encourage development.

Abandoned and derelict properties virtually decrease surrounding property values. They are eyesores, often attract crime, and lower neighbourhood desirability. We must politely refuse to preside over a municipality which allows a town or townships to become ghost house.

It is against this background that I wish to remind all and sundry that our municipality is still having unfinished business with some people who are





violating the law in the area of Ga-Kgapane. We will not dilly-dally when people break the law. Again, whenever, we are owed money, we will unashamedly keep popping-up at their doorstep until they pay our money.

As municipalities, we need property rates to fund essential public infrastructure, basic utilities, including community-wide services. These services cannot be billed to the individual households. Our municipality relies on property tax revenue to keep areas running, safe, and liveable.

We have reluctantly shown willingness to maintain legislated, transparent rebate and to uphold exemption policies for pensioners and indigent households to protect vulnerable ratepayers and maintain public trust.

South Africa is synonymous with situations where people and businesses are leaving the Central Business District (CBD) for new suburbs seeking safety, better amenities, and space. The shift away from filthy and congested city centres is primarily driven by the search for a higher quality of life and a desire to avoid deteriorating urban infrastructure.

We are the living witnesses of municipalities in Limpopo which were annexed to booming municipalities in their proximity during the process of redetermination of municipal boundaries mainly because they lacked tax base. It will be heartbreaking to see our municipality becoming defunct because somebody somewhere failed to collect revenue.

Madam Speaker, our electricity revenue increased by 9.01% as per NERSA draft tariff increase, municipality will submit the cost of supply study to NERSA for approval for 2026/2027 budget year. Electricity is the foundational lifeline of modern society. Equally for businesses and



residential areas, it drives productivity, powers communication, and ensures safety and comfort. Without a reliable power grid, daily life and economic activity essentially grind to a halt.

Electricity has become the impetus of our livelihoods. It empowers the machinery, computers, and tools required to manufacture goods and deliver services. Regarding safety and security, electricity has become a reliable power which ensures adequate lighting, operates security systems, and maintains climate control to protect inventory and physical assets.

Greater Letaba municipality is not licensed to supply electricity at the villages, but permitted to do likewise only in Modjadiskloof, town and Mokgoba.

As the municipality, we generate revenue from supplying electricity to achieve financial independence, cross-subsidize essential free basic services, and fund critical local infrastructure. Electricity sales typically function as one of income stream which assists in stabilizing our overall operating budgets.

We will continue to actively combat izinyoka whenever it rears its ugly head. The fight against electricity theft is crucial for the municipality to secure revenue, prevent catastrophic infrastructure damage, and protect public safety. Unchecked illegal connections and meter tampering cost the municipality, as utility provider, millions while causing network overloads that trigger prolonged blackouts for compliant and paying residents.

Madam Speaker, electrification brings tangible, life-altering benefits. It replaces dangerous, polluting kerosene lamps with clean, reliable



lighting. It enables refrigeration for life-saving medicines and vaccines, and powers water pumps that prevent waterborne diseases.

It provides safe lighting for learners to study at night and allows schools to use modern educational technology. Extends business hours for local traders and enables the use of electric tools for farming, carpentry, and food processing. It also empowers women by making household chores more efficient and extending time for market work. That is why, GBV is tapering off. Hungry men are no longer impatient at home because the meal is readily available.

Our municipality has installed 18 highmast lights in various villages, including 2 Solar powered highmast lights in Khetlhakoni and Sephokhubje. Through the INEP programme, Greater Letaba municipality has provided access to electricity to 3237 households since 2021.

For 2026/2027 budget year, electrification will cover the following village:

1. Shawela Village (178 Stands)
2. Rotterdam (68 stands)
3. Seabelolo View

Obviously, we cannot shy away from our customs and culture. The sisterly and brotherly advice we can offer free of charge is that people in the villages must continue to use electricity in combination with other energy sources which we have used since time immemorial.

We know that electrical grids in rural areas often suffer from unreliability and that there are prohibitive costs for continuous use of electricity in a household. Electricity is often exclusively used for low wattage needs like lighting, radio, and phone charging, as electrical cooking appliances





are a large, one-time investment that many low-income households cannot afford.

During planned and unplanned power interruptions, wood serves as a reliable, ever-present backup to guarantee a household can still prepare meals. Are you aware that food prepared from firewood is more delicious to devour than the rest?

Moreover, certain traditional meals such as boiling thick stews or slowly roasted barbecue or samp require high, continuous thermal output that is prohibitively expensive on an electric stove. Wood also imparts a distinct aroma appreciated in cultural recipes. So, let us go back to the basic culture and use electricity sparingly.

Let me hastily state that we are not encouraging our people to go on rampage to chop down trees. You will be arrested. We all know that we can only collect dry logs from the veld for firewood.

Madam Speaker, refuse removal has increased by 3.4% CPI inflation as per National Treasury circular no. 132 and has moved from R6.6 million to R6.8 million in 2026/2027.

Refuse removal is one of the core functions in our municipality. We need garbage collection to maintain public health, prevent disease outbreaks, protect local environments, and manage the growing volume of urban waste. Without organized removal, accumulated waste attracts vermin, contaminates water sources, and causes foul odours in residential and commercial areas.

Regular trash removal prevents the accumulation of rotting waste, which is a breeding ground for disease-carrying vectors like houseflies and rodents. Formal waste collection diverts refuse from illegal dumping sites. This protects local watercourses and groundwater from toxic runoff



and prevents the uncontrolled release of greenhouse gases like methane.

We are happy to announce that we will keep expanding garbage collection, not only in Modjadjiskloof town, Ga-Kgapane and Senwamokgope townships, but also at the villages. We have awash our villages with skip bins, and we remove the garbage on regular basis.

Since 2021, we have managed to procure 82 skips and 2200 trolley bins to extend waste collection across all wards within the municipality.

When households pay for refuse services, they ensure that the municipality is having the funds required to maintain consistent collection. We have made a giant leap forward regarding the Maphalle landfill site.

Landfill site is the final destination for municipal and industrial waste that cannot be recycled or incinerated. It provides a crucial, controlled environment to isolate residual waste, thereby preventing illegal dumping, mitigating environmental pollution, and protecting public health from disease-carrying pests and contaminated groundwater.

We commend the resuscitation of the construction of Maphalle landfill site. For 2026/2027 budget year, we have put aside R 46 000 000 for Maphalle landfill site. Upon its completion, the Maphalle landfill site will create vital job opportunities for local communities by transitioning traditional waste disposal into resource management. Key roles include waste sorting, recycling operations, equipment maintenance, and facility management, alongside specialized positions in environmental monitoring, landfill gas capture, and community education.

Madam Speaker, as per the DoRA directives, our 2026/2027 budget year allocation of Equitable Share is in the region of R 377 867 000.



Equitable Share is meant to subsidize the cost of delivering Free Basic Services (FBS) to indigent households and to help under-resourced municipalities afford basic administrative costs and core governance functions. It ensures equitable access to essential services nationwide, regardless of a local area's poverty levels or tax base.

For 2026/2027 budget year, our municipality's allotment of Finance Management Grant is R 2 100 000. This is a conditional capacity-building grant provided by the National Treasury to the municipality. Its primary purpose is to promote and support fiscal management reforms and help the municipality to fully implement the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA).

The grant finances internship programs to attract and train young graduates in accounting, finance, and auditing and building a talent pipeline for municipal finance. Since the genesis of this grant, numerous interns were recruited and upon completion of their internship, they were permanently employed in the municipality and elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) apportionment for 2026/2027 budget year for municipality is R 73 565 000. MIG is the financial backbone of capital projects in the municipality. MIG is a conditional government grant designed to eradicate basic service delivery backlogs. Its primary role is to provide capital funding for infrastructure such as water, sanitation, roads, and community facilities to improve the quality of life for impoverished households.

MIG alleviates poverty by targeting low-income communities and micro-enterprises to stimulate socio-economic development. It promotes local employment and skills transfer by actively supporting labour-intensive



construction methods through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The grand old man of economics has already disseminated that infrastructure expenditure directly drives economic growth by reducing the cost of doing business, boosting productivity, and creating jobs. Building new infrastructure creates immediate construction jobs and increases demand for raw materials. It is imperative for the municipality to persist spending hundred percent of MIG and never let the money return to National Treasury for the sake of the economy of the municipality.

Our municipality has used MIG for paving streets. Paving of streets is essential for modern infrastructure, directly improving community health, safety, and economic vitality. It eliminates dust and mud, enables all-weather access, reduces vehicle wear, and controls stormwater runoff. Ultimately, paved street provides smooth, reliable transportation routes that connect people to jobs, emergency services, and daily necessities.

Greater Letaba municipality is one of formative municipalities which started paving of street some years ago. Paving of street has been perennial in the municipality. Our municipality, especially Modjadji valley is mountainous, whilst other areas remain inaccessible and slippery during rainy seasons. Paving of street program has ameliorated the lives of people whose streets were impassable before.

From 2021 to date, we managed to construct a myriad of street paving projects, as follows:

1. Makhutukwe Street Paving- 1.8km
2. Raphahlelo Street Paving- 2.5 km





3. Sephukubye Street Paving-2.98
4. Motsinoni Street paving
5. Jokong street Paving 4,4km
6. Mamokgadi Street paving 2,6km
7. Rampepe Access Bridge
8. Mohlabaneng Street Paving 3,3km
9. Ramodumo Street Paving 3,5km
10. Abel Street Paving 2,8km
11. Moshakga/Makaba Street Paving 2,5km
12. Masakaneng street paving 3km
13. Ramaroka Street Paving 3,4km

A paved street is not just an ordinary paved strip of asphalt, but rather a vital lifeline that connects families, links learners to schools, and drives economic participation. It is the physical foundation for a journey, symbolizing both movement and the bridging of communities across communities of our municipality and beyond.

Our paved streets enable farmers to transport fresh produce to markets and allow small businesses to grow, essentially connecting workers to employment and opportunities. Without paved streets, we have seen farmers in the municipality whose fresh produce cannot be consigned to markets, and as results they bleed deficit or suffer monetary loss.

We need to spend a great deal of time and resources with business people and farmers, to talk seriously about commercial roads in our municipality. If we prioritize the construction and maintenance of



commercial roads, we will be stimulating local economic growth, maximize revenue generation, and attract private investment.

Well-maintained commercial corridors reduce transportation and logistical costs, keep supply chains moving efficiently, and ensure residents have reliable access to jobs and essential services. We know that some among us may pick up a fight with us for being lopsided to commercial roads. But in essence, it is pointless to spend resources on access roads to beer halls for people who are in a drinking stupor to roll back home.

Quality roads connect production centres to markets, allowing local businesses in agriculture and retail to operate profitably. Reliable transport routes draw new private enterprises to municipality, expanding the industrial base and creating local employment.

Commercial roads facilitate high-volume traffic, bolstering the local tax base through increased property values, local business revenues, and commercial rates. A larger tax base provides the municipality with more funding to invest in broader community services.

We all know that motorists always plan their travelling by avoiding bad road even if it is a shortcut road. They will rather use detour road as long as it is a perfect road and well maintained.

Flowing from the above, we have noted that in some areas, municipal infrastructure is plagued by climate related disaster. All of this indicates that far more immersion must be placed on building resilient infrastructure. Our municipality, together with other spheres of government, need to focus on managing climate change risks and the upshots of changing weather patterns.



Disasters negatively affect municipal streets by causing severe structural degradation such as surface washaways, sinkholes, and collapsed bridges which deliver community access to vital services. This physical damage immediately disrupts emergency response, halts economic supply chains, and diverts limited municipal budgets away from standard maintenance.

Heavy flooding and torrential rains scour away the sub-base and surface layers of roads. This frequently causes unpaved gravel streets to completely wash away, rendering them impassable. Rapidly moving water and saturated ground wash away the soil supporting the roadbed, leading to sudden collapses, deep cavities, and sinkholes.

The last November-December period was particularly arduous and gruelling regarding disasters. Our resilience was tested beyond expectation. We have responded to 767 disaster affected households.

Section 17 of the MFMA outlines the required contents of an annual budget. It mandates that municipalities must include both operating and capital expenditure. This requires budgeting for operational repairs and maintenance, as well as the renewal and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

Of course, we are not sitting on our laurels. We have made grade by protecting our streets from climate change-induced flooding by shifting from reactive repairs to proactive resilience. This involves upgrading road materials to withstand water damage, implementing nature-based solutions, expanding stormwater infrastructure capacity, and strictly clearing debris to prevent drainage blockages.

We also tried our best by ensuring that we construct the streets by using superior subgrade treatments and cement-treated bases rather than





standard asphalt to prevent erosion and structural collapse. We install porous surfaces in low-traffic areas to allow water to soak into the ground instead of overwhelming the surface.

We will relentlessly try to improve the construction of street paving and the use technology so that our street paving remains resilient to climatic changes. But so far, sometimes we win and sometimes we lose. Succinctly, climate change is a new phenomenon, and it is like a mixed bag of wins and losses.

Again, section 63 of the MFMA makes the accounting officer responsible for the asset management of the municipality, which legally requires the safeguarding and regular maintenance of those assets.

It is against this backdrop that we plead with communities not to deliberately vandalise or damage our street paving projects. We are a rural municipality and we have experienced some shortcomings as regards to revenue collection and the meagre budget we have had is not enabling us to maintain all the street paving projects we have constructed.

We appeal to our people to look after the municipality's street paving projects in their areas. Allowing a street paving of the municipality to submerge under the soil right in front of your gate is tantamount to wilful, conscious, or highly negligent failure to perform one's obligations.

What does street paving project official handover to communities mean? It is not just about cutting the ribbon and celebrating the completion of the project and that the street is officially open for use. It also means that although the asset belongs to the municipality, the receiving community must know the basic maintenance techniques to prolong the lifespan of the street paving.



We wish to make a clarion call to our taxi businesspeople. If you were disembarking or alighting passengers far from their homes because of the poor and critically bad state of the streets, kindly ensure that in areas where we have constructed street paving, just drift nearer to their homes or destinations, and avoid inconveniencing passengers. Otherwise, our people who are your daily passengers will see no value in the street paving if they continue to catch taxis far away from their homes.

Moreover, we all know that taxi businesspeople dislike using poor and critical bad routes because their taxis get damaged or worn out even before the instalment is paid in full. However, they need to have a symmetrical approach because in the absence of taxis as mode of transport, pirating cabs will move in and take the role of transporting people. Ultimately, when the state of routes gets improved as results of construction of paving street, you will have skirmishes with the pirating cabs because they will not cave in.

We call upon the taxi businesspeople to service their routes regardless of the state of the routes. Perseverance is the mother of success. This means that consistently putting in effort and refusing to give up, despite challenges or setbacks, is what ultimately breeds achievement. Moreover, if you do not venture somebody else will.

All of us know as matter of fact that the construction of the above alluded street paving projects served as major engines for local job creation. They generated immediate, hands-on employment for general workers and provided long-term career pathways for skilled tradespeople like asphalt foremen, site agents, and project managers.

For 2026/2027 budget year, we have street paving projects currently at the design stage, as follows:





1. Rotterdam to Sephukubje Street paving
2. Itieleng (Ga-Rapitsi) street paving
3. Mapaana Street Paving Phase 2
4. Thlabeleni to Lenokwe Street Paving

Meanwhile, roads projects to be implemented in 2026/2027 budget will be Sekgopo Moshate street paving and Ramphenyane bridge.

Madam Speaker, we have also completed multiple bridges through the Municipal Disaster Response Grant, as follows:

1. Reconstruction of Mamaila Kolobetona (Happy Stars Section)
2. Reconstruction of low-level bridge at Mandela Park
3. Ramaroka low-level bridge
4. Rehabilitation of street and stormwater channel of Sekgopo Ramogadi
5. Tshamahansi Low-Level Bridge
6. Mokwasele Low-Level Bridge
7. Buqa Low level bridge
8. Roerfontein Low level Bridge
9. Rehabilitation of Eugene Street and Stormwater management

A bridge is a sign of civilisation. Without a bridge, people plunge into flowing rivers with their possessions and bags lifted and trying to balance themselves against the raging currents because they want to arrive home to their loved ones. All and sundry here, have known a soul or two who got drowned while attempting to cross a flowing river. We all know the notoriety of Molototsi river, as an example.





If we fail to construct bridges, it implies that the number of people who drown will surge. A modern government must not rejoice in burying people who perish at riverbanks; hence we have committed sufficient resources to build a plethora of bridges in our municipality.

There is more in a bridge than meets the eye. It symbolizes transition, connection, and transformation. It represents the journey from one phase of life to another, the linking of divided people or ideas, and the courage required to overcome obstacles.

Bridges represent the passage from one state of being to another. They signify leaving the past behind, embracing new awareness, and navigating major life milestones. They physically and metaphorically unite things that were previously separated whether that means bridging cultural divides, linking individuals, or connecting the physical world to the spiritual.

A bridge is a solution to an impassable barrier, such as a river or chasm. It symbolizes human resilience, problem-solving, and faith. By building bridges, we have solved problems which traumatised our people.

One of the beautiful bridges we built was at the entrance of Rampepe village. This village is located in such a way that there is only one road leading to the village. Other roads are but donkey cart. By donkey cart roads I mean, rural tracks or auxiliary pathways primarily designed or heavily used by animal-drawn carts.

Prior to the construction of the bridge, if it rained and Rampepe village was literally cut from the outside world. Not even bread trucks would access the village. Scholar transport would not get onto the secondary school at the village. The situation was quite pathetic and chaotic. Life





came to a halt at the village. And we said, this cannot go unbated on our watch as the leadership.

Rampepe bridge is just but an illustration. Time does not permit to dwell on the history of all the bridges we have built. In some villages, people were visibly emotional as we officially handed over the bridges to the communities upon completion. We have physically improved the standard of living for many of our people.

Madam Speaker, in the last five years we have brought pivot to fuller fruition and completed sports facilities in various villages out of funding from the MIG with the following simple illustration:

1. Kgapane Stadium
2. Thakgalane Sports Complex
3. Outdoor gyms at Matshwi, Bodupe and Rotterdam
4. Sekgopo Sports Facility, comprising of 2 Combi Courts, ablution and change rooms.

As the municipality, we took a deliberate decision to build sporting facilities in order to foster public health, reduce crime by giving youth safe alternatives to unpleasant habits, bridge socio-economic divides, and stimulate the local economy. These facilities also function as vital community hubs that bring people of diverse backgrounds together to build social cohesion.

Most importantly, accessible athletic infrastructure such as outdoor fields, running tracks, and swimming pools encourage residents to engage in physical activities, lowering rates of chronic illnesses like obesity and cardiovascular disease.

In a similar vein, local sports complexes provide a structured, safe environment for young people. They keep the youth engaged in





constructive activities and away from negative societal influences like drugs and gang involvement.

Madam Speaker, allow me to congratulate the following individuals who continue to inspire excellence within our communities.

1. Bolobedu Athletics Club with eight (8) members who qualified for Comrades Marathon (will be participating in June 2026 at Durban). One of our employees Moagi Salome is one of them.
2. Netball (National Junior Telkom Championship) Seven (07) players qualified for the final trials
3. Our juksui team, for being awarded position one at Limpopo Sports, Arts and Culture Awards.
4. Ms Emily Mopai from Madumeleng village who received an award (position 1) for Community Sports Development.

Madam Speaker, the following projects remain under construction and substantial progress is being observed:

1. Maphalle landfill site phase 2 (multi-year), is expected to be completed by 2028. This is one of the most ambitious and complex projects ever implemented by this municipality.
2. Construction of Street Paving at Maupa (4.9 km) (multi-year)
3. Construction of Burkino Faso Street Paving (2 km) Multi year.
4. Upgrading of Mokwakwaila Stadium Phase 2.
5. Construction of Thibeni Street Paving 2.3Km (multi-year) to be completed by 2028
6. Construction of Boshakge Bridge, to be completed by 2028

We hope that the incoming administration after the November 04th 2026 community elections will not adopt asymmetrical approach to these projects. We know that the so-called Bermuda roads and some other



incomplete projects across the country are as a result of transition because of elections. We hope that sanity will prevail, regardless of the political party which wins the elections.

It is crystal clear that the following projects remain under construction and will be completed by end of this year:

1. Repair of Bodupe street (paving) 0.4km
2. Matswi low-level bridge
3. Tshabelammatswale low-level bridge

Madam Speaker, as regards to Economic Development, we are happy to announce that the following activities were initiated:

389 Land Use Applications for various developments were approved. 521 New RDP Houses were completed, 58 previously incomplete RDP houses were attended to. 117 Temporary Residential Units were constructed in response to the overwhelming disaster experienced by the municipality. At least 150 SMMEs were directly supported through multiple interventions, including direct funding.

Modjadjiskloof Extension 4 (Vrystaat Farm) presents us with a great opportunity to grow our municipality. In the farm, the municipality has an opportunity to develop the first state of the art and modern township since the advent of democracy. The EIA process for the township has been successfully completed. We are at a stage where we need the installation of bulk-services and partnerships with the organs of state and private companies will enable us to finalise the development of this township.

Through it, the people of Greater Letaba will come back to their proud town and it will once more be a great town of doing business, shopping,



entertainment and it will be the beautiful town that we know and are proud to associate with, Modjadjiskloof Town.

With regard to Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), we are tasked with driving local economic growth by creating a conducive environment for Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) to thrive, establishing market access, providing essential infrastructure, and balancing business development with regulatory compliance to reduce unemployment and poverty.

As part of our Local Economic Development trajectories, we implement strategies to foster entrepreneurship and integrate local SMMEs into regional value chains. We have facilitated access to business advice, mentorship, and capacity-building programs to improve the survival rates of start-ups.

We have improved and professionalised our SMME Support Fund. In the year under review, the fund has increased from just over R700 000 to R 2000 000. Forty-four (44) enterprises benefitted from the fund and these enterprises are from all our clusters of the Municipality. The incoming administration has a task to increase a budget for this fund because this is one way in which the frontiers of poverty will be pushed back and many jobs will be created.

Over and above processing land use applications, the municipality has been instrumental in managing municipal land and zoning laws, determining where distinct types of businesses can operate and reducing real estate barriers for new businesses. We have provided resources such as trading facilities for the informal sector, and we also have conceived the idea of providing manufacturing hubs, and business





incubators. We hope that the leadership that will come after our tenure has lapsed will “take into consideration some of these noble ideas.

It is quite clear that the era of incomplete RDP houses has become a thing of the past. In South Africa, housing construction is primarily a provincial government mandate. However, our municipality has functioned as the frontline facilitator and local administrator. Our roles in relation to incomplete or abandoned RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses involve specific duties and responsibilities.

We assigned ourselves the roles of ensuring that we monitor RDP housing projects within our jurisdiction, and we flag incomplete, abandoned, or shoddily built houses to CoGHSTA. We compile progress reports and identify where contractors have abandoned sites. And we are happy to announce that our efforts were not in vain.

We have Bolobedu Solar Farm. It is a renewable solar energy infrastructure of a 148-megawatt operated by Volitalia South Africa with the aim to contribute towards the country's transitioning to sustainable energy generation, energy security and economic transformation. The solar farm is situated within the Greater Letaba Local Municipality, surrounded by three communities namely (Mohlabaaneng, Shawela and Ga-Ramaroka). The project forms part of the broader Independent Power Producer (IPP) framework.

During construction period, 1124 job were created. Youth Digital Empowerment Initiatives to the tune of R 200 000 covered schools such as Kheale Secondary received Digital Research training for 80 learners; Manonyaneng Secondary school and Realedisha Secondary school received Microsoft Licence (12 Months) targeting all 4 schools; and





Motsipa Secondary school received Wi-Fi Supply for a period of 12 Months, including Tablets and Laptops for 40 learners.

When fire occurred and was reported by the Realedisha secondary school, the Bolobedu Solar Farm undertook repairs amounting to R 2 547 729.00.

The Bolobedu Solar Farm is continuously obligated to provide sustainable social initiatives which encompass Enterprise Development, Local Job Creation, Preferential Procurement, and Socio-Economic Investments.

Discussions are underway for the Molototsi Solar Farm in Ditshosini Village. If everything goes according to plan, together with Bolobedu Solar Farm, this project will place Greater Letaba as one of the best Green Producing Municipalities in the country. In concluding this deal, we urge the community of Ditshosini to work with all stakeholders including the municipality in order not to repeat some of the mistakes which were made at Bolobedu Solar Farm.

Madam Speaker, for the budget year 2026/2027 we have set aside R 2 597 000 for Expanded Public Works Program (EPWP). EPWP is a nationwide government initiative in South Africa that helps municipalities fight poverty and unemployment by providing temporary work, skills training, and income relief to unskilled and vulnerable individuals.

The EPWP serves as a vital bridge between municipal service delivery and local economic development. It provides a crucial temporary income and social safety net for vulnerable, unemployed, and unskilled members of the community.

It helps jobseekers to overcome the lack of experience barrier by equipping them with practical workplace skills, making them more





employable in the long term. Usually, we have two types of EPWP in the municipality. We will continue to stress this point until the cows come home. We have deployed the EPWP for environment to assist the municipality within the context of waste management. Meanwhile, we deploy the other EPWP group to continue to assist the municipality by cleaning and maintaining our infrastructure such as street paving. We prefer them because it is a labour-intensive method instead of heavy machinery, which extends budgets and improves community environments.

But alas! You all know what our EPWP are known for, especially if they are left to work on their own without stringent supervision. There is a perception that EPWP workers are sleeping along the roads, and this has led to frequent subject of public frustration and political debate.

This matter has sparked several widespread sentiments and ongoing developments. The sight of inactive or resting workers frequently sparks social media backlash and satire. I think many of you have seen what I am talking about on social media.

Anyway, we managed to create 1719 job opportunities through our Extended Public Works Programme.

Madam Speaker, we have continued to provide support to the Mokwakwaila Thusong Service Centre (TSC). Mokwakwaila Thusong Service Centre acts as a one-stop hub that brings integrated government services, information, and development programs directly to the local community. Its primary goal is to reduce long-distance travel and improve the quality of life for rural residents.

The centre frequently hosts visiting mobile units to provide necessary frontline services to the community. They process birth registrations, ID





applications, and passport renewals. We have also constructed new ablutions at the award winning Thusong Service Centre.

Madam Speaker, our immediate task when we came into the administration was to stabilize the municipality's finances. I am proud to confirm that we have not lowered the bar in this regard.

The municipality has consistently retained Unqualified Audit Opinion from 2021 through to 2025 fiscal year. All our grants were spent at 100%. We have not returned even a cent to the National Fiscus.

We have now turned a corner and are preparing Annual Financial Statements internally. Council took a conscious decision to instruct the accounting officer to open an investment account with Standard Bank. This decision, along with stringent cashflow measures, has greatly improved our financial position.

We have not incurred any irregular expenditure in the current fiscal year. Unauthorized Expenditure was reduced from R505 Million in 2021 to zero in 2026. Irregular Expenditure was reduced from R23 million to R2.9 million.

Madam Speaker, on organizational development, the municipality has, during this period procured 111 laptops, making sure that employees have reliable tools of trade to deliver on the Council mandate. 66 new employees were appointed and the number will certainly go up as recruitment processes are currently underway. 61 training interventions were implemented to capacitate staff and councillors.

South Africa is increasingly becoming a coalescence of political community. Municipal councils are fraught with political formations. Providing leadership in municipal council requires extra ordinary



acumen. We are grateful that we never experienced political instability and paralysis in our municipality.

We were never precluded from accomplishing our desired results. We achieved whatever we set ourselves to realize. Our Achilles' heel has always been the fact that municipalities are grossly funded. This has been a thorny matter across the board. It demands the attention of everyone to work out amicable panacea which must be in the best interest of our people.

Though we are still awaiting the final report on our funding status, the interim report we have received from the Provincial Treasury is that for the first time in many years Greater Letaba Municipal Council that took place last week has adopted a funded budget for the next financial year. This means we will be leaving a financially sound municipality for the next council.

This feat was achieved by the municipality in 2021 when we began our office term, as the municipality was one of the ten (10) most distressed municipalities in the province.

In conclusion, local government elections in South Africa are a snapshot of consciousness at a given moment. South Africa is not synonymous with tyrants who cling to power at whatever cost and to the detriment of democracy. We trust that an avalanche of sobriety we have seen from our people will always prevail.

“Avoid criticism, say nothing, do nothing and become nothing” Unknown author.

May the grace of God continue to cover you as with the shields.

Thank you very much.



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#SOMA2026



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