

R100m locked in to police station build

Muizenberg to benefit over crime-ridden areas in more need

FORGET crime-ridden areas such as Khayelitsha, Nyanga and Vrygrond... the national Public Works Department confirmed it approved a R100 million budget for a "super" police station for the seaside suburb of Muizenberg.

The mega-project came as a surprise to residential role players as the department announced a new plan which would include large-scale excavation to make the

Siyabonga Sesant

station, which is perched on a steep hill, bigger.

Initial plans proposed five years ago only entailed the upgrading of the building, which was built in the 1900s.

Muizenberg's crime statistics pale in comparison with those of Khayelitsha and Nyanga, where the murder rate was five and 10 times higher, respectively.

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According to Statistics SA, there were 27 murders reported in Muizenberg last year, while 279 people were killed in Nyanga and 161 in Khayelitsha during the same period.

A total of 288 robbery with aggravated circumstances cases were opened in

Muizenberg last year, Nyanga recorded 1503 and Khayelitsha 1226.

Councillor Jerry Gordon, whose ward includes the Vrygrond area, one of the poorest townships in Cape Town, said the Muizenberg police station was "practically inaccessible" for Vrygrond residents, who had to travel more than 4km to report a crime.

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SLIPPERY SLOPE: Muizenberg Police Station.

PICTURE: BHEKI RADEBE

Public works cops it from councillors

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"The majority of people in Vrygrond don't have cars, so if a crime happens in the middle of the night, they'd have to catch a taxi – and where are the taxis at that time? That's why most crimes go unreported.

"I support the upgrade, but why can't they build a station where the people are? We've been asking for one for eight years."

Muizenberg councillor Aimee Kuhn said: "Where the station is, is a white privileged area... the community that needs services, that needs schools and clinics and a police station, is Vrygrond.

"We acknowledge the station needs an upgrade. So we've proposed public works

upgrades to what the plans were five years ago, and use the rest to upgrade other stations in the cluster so all can benefit.

"The picture that's being painted is that, as the councillor, I should just sign off and be happy because it's resources for my ward. But that's not going to address apartheid spatial planning, which we are being criticised for not addressing it."

Western Cape police referred all media queries to the department. Spokesperson Thami Mchunu said the project was signed off because it was on the "Police capital works priority list".

Mchunu said there were no immediate plans to build additional police stations in Cape Town. – siyabonga.sesant@inl.co.za