

Sinkhole road repair on hold

‘Repairing the sinkhole is a process and we need to know who owns the road before work can begin,’ says government department.

Bennitt Bartl

Repair work has stalled on a sinkhole-stricken Centurion road – all because the government does not know to whom the road belongs.

“Repairing the sinkhole is a process and we need to know who owns the road before work can begin,” said department of public works and infrastructure spokesperson Thami Mchunu.

Stephanus Schoeman Road towards the R55 was completely closed in March last year, after several sinkholes formed as a result of heavy rainfall.

The road is often used by Valhalla residents to go to Laudium.

This week, the department confirmed that repair work had yet to start.

“The department’s dolomite unit, in conjunction with Tshwane metro officials, took the initiative to thoroughly investigate the causes of sinkholes,” said Mchunu.

“The road had to be completely closed, as there is more than one sinkhole.”

Mchunu said the department was bringing together stakeholders to discuss a way forward.

“The department cannot work alone because this work requires both funding and a safe long-term sustainable solution.”

A meeting to determine the total cost of repairing the sinkhole was scheduled for the coming month.

“The meeting, scheduled for August, will bring together affected interested

parties,” Mchunu said.

“During the meeting, a suitable repair and rehabilitation strategy for the road in general and the sinkholes in particular will be discussed.”

Valhalla residents have once again voiced their frustration at the delay in repairs.

Shereen Tayob, a home business owner in Valhalla, said her business was suffering because of the time it took her customers to make their way to her.

“The sinkholes have still not been sorted out and the formation of another sinkhole in Alaric Road last year has also made things worse,” she said.

“My clients do not want to visit my business anymore because it is such a hassle.”

Another resident, Junaid Ismail, said residents in the area had been given a range of excuses as to why the roads were not being repaired.

“We have been told there is no money for the repairs,” said Ismail.

“In the end, the road belongs to the government – and they should be the ones fixing it.

“In the meantime, nothing is being done and we are perturbed by the inconvenience.”

One resident makes two trips a day to Laudium to drop her children off at school each day.

“A trip, which in the past took just 10 minutes, now takes at least 25 minutes longer,” said Shaida Aboo.

“Sometimes, to make things worse, the military closes the roads we use.”