

NEW GOVT DEPARTMENTS FOR HOWICK

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With locals having to travel out of town to the Departments of Home Affairs and Labour, the Department of Public Works is planning to bring these services closer to Howick.

uMngeni Municipality's council has approved a project, worth some R50 million, by the Department of Public Works for a new building in Howick to accommodate these much needed government offices.

"We want to ensure they are easily accessible," said Simthemobile Gaxela from the Department of Public Works, who was presenting to the council.

Departments to be housed in this building include Home Affairs, currently in a tiny office in KwaMevana, the Department of Labour, and Sassa (South Africa Social Security Agency), which will move from the Stocklands Centre in Somme Street.

The new building in Howick will be where Home Affairs is, on



Khwela Street behind the Magistrate's Court. In a clever exchange between the municipality and Public Works, the latter gets the municipal-owned land where Home Affairs currently is, while uMngeni gets the land on Morling Street opposite the court/police station, currently the site of two derelict Public Works-owned houses, as well as the unused taxi rank. This entire area will be developed into a NEW expanded rank.

DA councillor Janis Holmes asked why Sassa should move from

its current building as it had only recently moved. She also raised concerns about the traffic resulting from the new building, as there are schools nearby.

Gaxela said Sassa leases its property. "We want to take them out of that lease and have them in one area with others." The project should create 500 temporary jobs during construction.

uMngeni Mayor Sizwe Sokhela said there were plans to widen the road to accommodate the traffic once these offices opened.