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## Plans to commence construction of a new police station in Mariannhill



The current police station is operating out of park homes. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

The KwaZulu-Natal provincial government has recommended the establishment of a multi-agency task team that will fast-track the construction of a new police station in Mariannhill.

The decision to build a new police

station in the area was made after a meeting held on February 28 where Council made the decision to give land to the Public Works Department.

The Mariannhill area has been under the spotlight due to a spate of

crime incidents, especially the rampant murders and drug-abuse issues.

These include five people who were gunned down in a vehicle repair workshop in February and 14 people killed in separate incidents, which has left the community living in fear.

The current police station serves a wide area, covering six wards, and is operating out of park homes, which makes the working conditions of the police difficult and causes congestion for members of the public who use the station.

Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs MEC, Siboniso Duma, made the announcement during his oversight visit to the Mariannhill Police Station on Sunday.

Duma said the National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Development, together with eThekweni Municipality, have identified land to build a new police station in Mariannhill.

"Once formed, the task team, which will include three spheres of

government, will meet regularly to clear all bottlenecks that may delay the construction of the new police station," he said.

The MEC said the police station will be a modern facility with advanced technology, which will respond to the provincial government's resolve to confront crime head-on and close all spaces for criminals.

"The new police station will go a long way in fighting rampant crime in Mariannhill, Mariannridge, Dassenhoek, KwaNdengezi and surrounding areas. As government, we cannot rest on our laurels while our communities are held at ransom by criminals who kill with impunity.

"The new police station will allow for quicker response times to emergency situations, provide a more visible policing and offer specialised services to the community."

Duma condemned the multiple killings of people, including the proliferation of drug dens and drug abuse by young people in these areas, and urged the communities to work

with government and police to root out crime in KwaZulu-Natal.

Police officers who are suspected of colluding with criminals in the commission of crime in the area were also condemned. Meanwhile, law enforcement officers were urged to operate in a fair and just manner while serving the community.

However, Duma warned that building a new police station alone may not be enough to address the root causes of crime in the community.

"Addressing poverty, inequality and social ills also plays a critical role in reducing the crime rate," he said.

The MEC also visited the KwaNdengezi Police Station to monitor crime and gender-based violence (GBV) cases, as well as challenges faced by the police stations.

During his visit to the two police stations, Duma unveiled two park homes that will serve as victim-friendly rooms where GBV victims will receive psychosocial support.

— Highway Mail.