



public works
& infrastructure

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Public Works and Infrastructure
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Enquiries: James de Villiers 082 766 0276

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SPEECH EXTRACT

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND MOU SIGNED BETWEEN NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL DPWI AND ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY TO RELEASE STATE PROPERTIES FOR REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

(Note to editors: The following extracts are from a speech delivered at a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing between the National and Provincial Departments of Public Works & Infrastructure and the City of eThekweni at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre on Wednesday evening, 06 November 2024. The full version of the speech can be found [here](#), and a complete list of the identified properties can be found [here](#).)

“I need to applaud the leadership of MEC Martin and Mayor Xaba who played an instrumental role in making this happen. I also want to acknowledge the technical engagements that have taken place between our spheres led by Mr. Sibande.

We have put our ideological differences aside, and decided to do what is in the best interest of the residents of eThekweni and the greater KwaZulu-Natal.

It is only because we have decided to work together, that we are able to take this historic and first-of-its-kind action we are taking today.

Tonight is a good example to all of us what can be achieved when we work together towards the common good of our people.

It is this kind of action which is possible under the new spirit of collaboration under the Government of National Unity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

And, as we have seen in the video just shown, officials in the three spheres of government have also worked tirelessly to identify a number of properties within the city which will soon be released for Requests for Proposal.

This will allow the private sector, other state agencies, or nonprofit agencies to engage us with ideas on how to utilize these properties towards truly benefitting the people of eThekweni either through repurposing or redevelopment.

The days of state buildings standing empty, attracting crime to communities and chasing away investment is coming to an end.

The days of the state hanging onto properties it doesn't need - or is unable to maintain - is coming to an end.

This is indeed a big policy shift and gives truth to our vision to use public assets for public good.”

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“Roughly two months ago, we publicly announced that the department will be forming a technical task team with the City of eThekweni to tackle problem buildings across the city.

We wanted the task team to identify the problem buildings across the city, and start working together to find solutions for these properties across the city.

The provincial department of Public Works & Infrastructure soon joined us on this mission.

The video of properties listed you have seen earlier is the culmination of the work this task team have been doing.

And soon, these properties will be released for requests for proposals to help us find solutions on how we should use them.

Imagine properties such as the Police Barracks in the Durban Waterfront no longer standing empty and being an eyesore, but either being used to by a state agency who needs it, or by the private sector who refurbished it into housing.

Imagine the former hijacked Excelsior Court in the Berea no longer forcing residents to be hostages in their homes, but rather a modern residential development that generates rates for the city and a building that takes pride of place in the community.

Imagine the number of historic buildings either owned by the national or provincial department, or the city, being repaired through a partnership with the private sector and used for both public and commercial users.

This is the first time this would ever be done in the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure, and will soon be replicated countrywide.

And, this is a strong signal to the property and private sector, not only in KwaZulu-Natal, but across the country, that we are putting words into action.

Today shows you how serious we are about crowding in private sector investment into state assets.

The opportunities are truly boundless.”

Enquiries

James de Villiers

Spokesperson to the Minister

James.Devilliers@dpw.gov.za

082 766 0276

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