

**OLIFANTSFONTEIN BUSINESS DIALOGUE
30 SEPTEMBER 2026**

Good morning, councillors, officials, of the City of Ekurhuleni, and fellow business leaders.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the City on behalf of the Olifantsfontein Business Forum.

For several years, the Olifantsfontein Business Forum has engaged consistently and constructively with the City of Ekurhuleni regarding the serious infrastructure and service-delivery challenges facing businesses in Olifantsfontein. We have raised concerns, attended meetings, provided information, and repeatedly called for practical intervention.

Yet, despite these efforts, many of the underlying problems remain unresolved!

At this point, continuing to expect the same systems to correct themselves without meaningful intervention is simply not realistic.

Olifantsfontein is an important industrial and economic hub in the City of Ekurhuleni. It creates employment, supports local households, generates economic activity, and contributes significantly to the revenue base of Ekurhuleni.

But the very infrastructure that enables this economic activity is deteriorating!

Businesses are dealing with ageing infrastructure, a dilapidated state of our reservoir and associated water infrastructure, water leaks and an unreliable water and electrical supply network, deteriorating roads, road marking and traffic signs, vandalised and nonfunctioning traffic signals and potholes, a dilapidated stormwater and sewer network, inadequate and vandalised street lighting, crime, and delayed maintenance of essential municipal services.

These are not merely inconveniences!

It has a direct economic impact on business and the local economy.

Businesses are carrying increased operating costs and are funding several projects through the Olifantsfontein Business Forum.

Business expansion decisions are being delayed. Investor confidence is being affected. Production and productivity are being disrupted. And, most importantly, businesses are increasingly questioning whether it remains commercially viable to operate and invest in an area where essential infrastructure cannot be relied upon.

We cannot allow the decline to continue until businesses begin closing and investment leaves the area. By then, the economic and social consequences will be far more difficult and expensive to reverse.

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What businesses are asking for?

We are not asking for special treatment.

We are asking for the basic municipal services that businesses pay for through rates, taxes, and other contributions.

We are asking for roads that are maintained, reliable water and electrical infrastructure, functioning street lighting, effective responses to service failures, and decisive action to protect public infrastructure from vandalism.

We are also asking for accountability.

The City of Ekurhuleni has a responsibility to protect and maintain the essential infrastructure that enables a functioning commercial environment. ***That responsibility cannot simply be transferred to businesses while businesses are expected to continue carrying the financial burden of failing infrastructure.***

Where private investment is required to supplement municipal infrastructure, there must be a clear and fair framework for recognising that investment. Businesses cannot continually be expected to fund the repair and replacement of infrastructure that should form part of the municipality's core service-delivery responsibility.

We want partnership, not conflict.

The Olifantsfontein Business Forum does not want a confrontational relationship with the municipality. But we are also sending a clear and unapologetic message to the city, that when the survival of business and the livelihood of employees is at stake, as it currently is, business have no alternative but to explore all available avenues, to ensure that the city meets its constitutional obligations in terms of infrastructure maintenance and service delivery.

We want a working partnership, but a partnership that produce results.

We need regular, structured engagement between organised business and the municipality, with clear commitments, responsible officials, measurable timeframes, and transparent follow-ups.

When a business reports a serious service-delivery problem, there needs to be a reasonable turnaround time. When roads and utilities deteriorate, there needs to be visible and consistent maintenance. And when infrastructure is vandalised, there must be a coordinated response to protect it and prevent repeated losses.

Business should not have to repeatedly raise the same problems simply to have them acknowledged.

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A unique democratic challenge.

There is also an important issue that needs to be recognised.

Many of the owners and decision-makers behind Olifantsfontein businesses do not live within the local ward. They may therefore not have the opportunity to influence local municipal decisions through the ballot box.

But they employ residents.

They invest in the local economy.

They pay rates and taxes.

They create economic activity that benefits the wider community.

Their interests and concerns therefore deserve to be heard as legitimate stakeholders in the future of Olifantsfontein.

Our message is straightforward, Infrastructure creates jobs!

When roads, water systems, electricity, lighting, security infrastructure and other essential services function properly, businesses can operate efficiently, invest with greater confidence, expand their operations and create employment.

When infrastructure fails, businesses carry the cost.

And when those costs become unsustainable, businesses reconsider whether they should remain in the area.

That is why infrastructure is not simply a municipal maintenance issue. It is an economic development issue.

Our expectation from the municipality.

We therefore expect the City of Ekurhuleni to take decisive action to:

- Protect and restore the essential infrastructure that supports Olifantsfontein's economy.
- Establish regular and structured engagement with organised business.
- Improve the turnaround time for service-delivery complaints.
- Provide visible and consistent maintenance of roads, water infrastructure and municipal services.
- Address vandalism and protect critical infrastructure.
- Establish clear accountability and timeframes for resolving recurring problems.

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- Create an environment in which existing businesses can remain viable and new investment can take place.
- Recognise business as a strategic economic partner in the development of Olifantsfontein.

We also want today's engagement to be constructive.

We do not need another meeting filled with explanations, excuses or promises that are not followed by action.

We need a plan.

We need accountability.

And we need measurable progress.

The warning signs are already clear. If the deterioration continues unchecked, we risk reaching a point where continued industrial operation becomes commercially unviable. That would mean business closures, job losses, reduced investment and ultimately a loss of revenue for the municipality itself.

That outcome serves nobody!

Our message is simple.

The Olifantsfontein Business Forum wants to work with the municipality, not against it.

We believe that a strong business sector and a functioning municipality are not competing interests. They are mutually dependent.

When businesses grow, they employ people.

When people are employed, households are stronger.

When businesses invest, the local economy grows.

And when the economy grows, the municipality benefits as well.

But that cycle depends on reliable infrastructure and effective service delivery.

Business is not asking for favours. We are asking for the basic municipal services that allow us to invest, create jobs and grow the local economy!

Olifantsfontein has enormous economic potential.

The question before us is whether we act now to protect that potential — or wait until the decline becomes irreversible.

The time to address the decline is now.

Thank you.