

## CITY OF CAPE TOWN

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### MEDIA RELEASE

## City tackles service delivery backlog due to COVID-19

***Despite the challenges posed by the national lockdown regulations, the City of Cape Town has been working hard to continue service delivery at the standard it is known for. Nearly 5 000 pothole repairs have been completed, refuse collection has continued and greening projects in communities have since resumed. Read more below:***

'COVID-19 has definitely had a noticeable impact on the way we have been able to provide services to communities, and our staff have done exceptionally well under difficult circumstances, while also dealing with the emotional effects of living through a pandemic. Many staff members were simply not allowed to work as a result of the national regulations. With the move to Alert Level 1, it is an opportunity to get closer to the ideal levels of service delivery and to ramp up our efforts to work through backlogs and ensure our residents receive the quality of service delivery that Cape Town is known for,' said the City's Executive Mayor, Alderman Dan Plato.

### **Road maintenance and potholes**

Since 1 June 2020, the City's Transport Directorate conducted 4 647 pothole repairs, attended to 2 968 blocked stormwater catch pits, 1 219 flooding incidents and 1 152 missing stormwater covers or grids. The cost of these repairs amounts to R12 321 455.

'I want to state upfront that the general maintenance and repairs of our roads have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to assure residents that we are doing our utmost to clear the backlogs, and to keep to our routine road maintenance schedules as best we can, amid the health and safety protocols related to the pandemic. My office is attending to this matter and I am getting regular feedback from the maintenance teams across the city to monitor the progress. It is important to emphasise that lockdown levels may have been relaxed, but COVID-19 remains with us.

We are doing our utmost to ensure we deliver a quality of service delivery that all our residents have come to expect. Please continue adhering to physical distancing, wear cloth masks when in public and wash and/or sanitise your hands.

, ' said Alderman Plato.

The following factors are still having an impact on road maintenance:

- General road maintenance came to a halt on 27 March 2020 for nearly three months during Alert Level 5 and 4 of the national lockdown.
- Due to health and safety protocols, and social distancing requirements we had to reduce our staffing capacity.
- The severe weather and high rainfall over the past three months had a severe impact on the general condition of roads across the city. This situation is worsened by the limited preventative maintenance, which was allowed during April and May, while still faced with the backlog. At the same time, new maintenance issues are reported daily.

### **Drop-off facilities, refuse collection and illegal dumping**

The City's drop-off facilities have gradually reopened with the easing of national lockdown levels (allowing residents and small businesses to drop off limited loads of recyclables, garage waste, and other materials). A newly-revamped drop-off facility in Retreat was opened in September. The project took approximately 18 months to complete at a cost of R21,5 million.

Operating hours at the drop-off facilities have also been extended as follows:

- Monday to Saturday: 09:30 to 17:00
- Sundays and Public Holidays: 09:00 to 13:00

Refuse collection services have continued throughout lockdown, even though there have been some delays. In this instance, residents are reminded to please leave their bins out for collection until 20:00 on the scheduled day or to place them out the next morning if not serviced by then, unless otherwise communicated. We want to thank residents for their patience during this time. These delays however should not be an excuse for illegal dumping as refuse bins will be serviced.

Illegal dumping is a huge problem across the city. The City budgets approximately R110 million to R120 million for the clearing of illegal dumping hotspots each year across the City.

Those who are guilty of illegal dumping should note that if they are caught in the act, the owner/operator of the vehicle will have their vehicles impounded and will face steep fees before the vehicle can be released from the impound:

- First offence R8 700
- Second offence R11 700
- Third offence R17 400

The above fees exclude the fine of R5 000 for illegal dumping. The person caught dumping must pay both the fine and impoundment fee and submit both receipts to the pound in order for the vehicle to be released.

Dumping has a serious and lingering effect on the environment, as it may also contaminate surface and underground water, as well as damage City infrastructure.

### **Park maintenance**

Teams are carrying out work across the City to clean and maintain parks and open spaces through mowing and grass-cutting services rendered by City teams and appointed service providers.

The grass mowing function is a critical component of the overall greening and community services function in the City and a key component of the Departments service delivery.

Available staff have been optimised by:

- Restructuring work teams to increase mowing team capacity.
- Implementing overtime – to increase time capacity to meet mowing schedule demands and to respond to backlogs.
- Applying for special allowances to be paid to staff, who are willing to take on additional and higher level responsibilities i.e workers doing operational work.

The EPWP workers will complement the existing staff resources of the Department and will be used to expand the mowing teams at the respective Depots to service the normal mowing cycles and services.

Each depot will also have a reactive team to deal with emergency and high profile requests for mowing interventions.

### **Motor vehicle licensing**

The COVID-19 national lockdown during April, May and June caused a backlog with motor vehicle licensing and renewals. We were the first metro in South Africa to open our cash and licensing offices and we've done our best to perform the normal transactions and complete the backlog. We've completed more than 660 000 transactions, including vehicle licensing, since June 2020. During a normal month, we do about 100 000 transactions, but in August we did more than 200 000 transactions in an effort to work through the backlog.

When offices close to members of the public, City staff continue to process applications into the evenings and over weekends in an effort to deal with the COVID-19 backlog.

We thank all our customers for their patience.

**End**

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