

Written submission to the eThekweni Metro Municipality 2021/2022 Draft Budget¹

Based on an analysis of eThekweni Metro's draft budget for 2021/22, and on behalf of informal settlements in the city, we submit the following key recommendations:

1. The Metro must provide **transparent and detailed budget information and targets for all incremental basic services to informal settlements** (specifically ablution blocks, water standpipes, roads, footpaths, stormwater control and electricity). The lack of detail in the draft 2021/22 MTREF and IDP about how many service points will be delivered to informal settlements, where and when, is problematic. This needs to be addressed so that the metro's commitment to residents is clear and comprehensive.
2. The Metro must allocate sufficient funds to **repairs and maintenance** of toilets/ablution facilities and standpipes in informal settlements and this allocation must be clearly specified in the budget. The amount of funds allocated must ensure that residents have reliable, clean and safe access to services with minimal service interruptions.
3. The Metro's **capital budget allocations for projects in informal settlements must be increased** to meet the severe shortage of services. We are very concerned to see that the capital project for the provision of prepaid electricity to informal settlements has decreased from R50 million in 2020/21 to R40 million in 2021/22 and the capital project for the provision of Community Ablution Blocks has also declined from R30 million in 2020/21 to R20 million in 2021/22 financial year.
4. The Metro must **budget for and implement an easily accessible fault-reporting and monitoring system** for informal settlement infrastructure. Residents need to know who is responsible for each service, where to report faults and what response times to expect. Any repairs to taps and toilets must be completed efficiently. The metro must ensure that a high-quality repair and maintenance service is provided so that faults do not reoccur frequently.
5. The Metro must **invest in social facilitation to ensure meaningful engagement** with residents. Setting aside resources to engage residents on a regular basis will strengthen service delivery and democracy and we ask that eThekweni prioritise this.
6. The Metro must **protect residents from the risks of living in informal settlements and transit camps**. Shack fires have destroyed many homes and cost some residents their lives. There is an urgent need for firefighting and fire prevention services. Transit camps are also unsafe and precarious spaces. The Metro has not indicated its plans to eradicate these camps and this matter requires urgent attention.

Asivikelane Campaign – voice of informal settlements about basic services

The Asivikelane campaign supports communities in monitoring water, sanitation and refuse collection in informal settlements. The objective of the campaign is for informal settlement communities to have a voice during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic. On a monthly basis, community members answer questions about the above basic services and partner organizations send the reports and summaries to relevant key officials at eThekweni Metro.

This submission is based on community inputs and reflects the needs of informal settlement residents in the Metro. It is informed by a detailed analysis of the Metro's draft 2021/22 budget and offers recommendations for practical steps that eThekweni Metro can take to ensure that the budget

¹ This document was not submitted to the eThekweni Metro, but we publish it here for others to use.

responds to the needs of its most vulnerable residents. The body of this submission will discuss the budget analysis that supports each of our asks/recommendations.

1. Provide transparent and detailed budget information and targets for all incremental basic services to informal settlements

The Metro's budget and IDP documents recognise that addressing the housing and basic services backlogs through the provision of houses only is an impossible task. It therefore aims to "offer some improvement to the quality of life in informal settlements in the short term" through "incremental measures such as ablution blocks with male and female toilets and showers, refuse removal services, pedestrian paths with storm water channels, limited road access for emergency and solid waste vehicles, and a labour-based maintenance programme". We appreciate that the 2021/22 IDP further states that the Metro aims to rapidly scale up the delivery of incremental services to informal settlements over the next few years.²

However, we are very concerned that the Metro's draft 2021/22 MTREF and IDP do not indicate the specific budget information or targets for all incremental services (including ablution blocks, standpipes, roads, footpaths, stormwater control and electricity) and upgrading projects in informal settlements. Specifically, we found the following gaps:

- There is no specific budget allocation for standpipes in informal settlements.
- There is no mention of specific targets for water (standpipes) and sanitation (ablution blocks) in informal settlements. (The targets in the budget are aggregated to include both informal and rural areas making it impossible to identify targets specifically for informal areas).
- Neither the draft 2021/22 budget nor the draft 2021/22 IDP provides a target for the number of informal settlement household that will receive electricity in the coming financial year, despite the budget document referring to the "massive electrification of informal settlements".³
- The IDP sets a target of 95% of informal settlements to be provided with refuse removal services, but the budget for this goal is not indicated.⁴

Communities need to know what service level to expect from eThekweni Metro, where services will be installed and by when. The Metro must provide comprehensive budget and targets details in the 2021/22 MTREF and IDP so that there is a clear commitment to informal settlement residents.

2. Allocate sufficient funds to repairs and maintenance of toilets/ablution facilities and standpipes in informal settlements

² http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Government/City_Vision/IDP/Documents/2021_22_IDP.pdf. Page 183

³

http://www.durban.gov.za/Resource_Centre/reports/Documents/MediumTermRevenueAndExpenditureFramework2021_22.pdf Page 53

⁴ http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Government/City_Vision/IDP/Documents/2021_22_IDP.pdf Page 582

The draft 2021/22 IDP again emphasises the need for adequate maintenance of infrastructure.⁵ However, it is impossible to identify what has been allocated specifically for the repairs and maintenance of taps, toilets and ablution blocks in informal settlements.

Repairs and maintenance are usually funded from the operating budget and include a wide range of other items, including contracted services and staff costs. The draft 2021/22 MTREF states that R400 million has been allocated for maintenance and repairs as part of the 2021/22 operating budget for water, and R222 million has been allocated for maintenance and repairs as part of the 2021/22 operating budget for sanitation.⁶

In 2020/21 MTREF R498 million was allocated for maintenance and repairs as part of the operating budget for water, and R223 million was allocated for maintenance and repairs as part of the operating budget for sanitation.⁷ This means that almost 20% less has been allocated in the 2021/22 budget for the maintenance and repairs of water infrastructure, while the total allocation for sanitation maintenance and repairs remains almost unchanged.

Table 1: Budget allocations for maintenance and repairs in the water and sanitation operating budgets

Operating budget for repairs and maintenance of water and sanitation	Adopted 2020/21 R'million	Draft 2021/22 R'million	% change
Water	498	400	-19.7%
Sanitation	223	222	-0.4%

Source: eThekweni Metro Municipality 2020/21 Adopted MTREF and eThekweni Municipality 2021/22 Draft MTREF; own calculations

The allocations for repairs and maintenance above include maintenance to all water and sanitation infrastructure. It does not specifically show what been allocated for the maintenance of taps, toilets and ablution blocks in informal settlements in the draft budget, which is a major concern.

Broken taps, intermittent water and blocked or damaged toilets are persistently reported by informal settlement residents. Failing to fix taps and toilets presents a financial problem to the municipality because its infrastructure investment is likely to rapidly deplete. More importantly, it creates a social and health problem because broken infrastructure directly affects the hygiene and well-being of residents. Therefore, eThekweni must allocate sufficient funds to ensure that residents of informal settlements have reliable, clean and safe water and sanitation access with minimal interruptions to the service. The repairs and maintenance budget allocation and plan must be clearly stated in the budget documents.

3. Increase the budget allocation for capital projects in informal settlements

We are very concerned to see that the capital project for the provision of prepaid electricity to informal settlements has decreased from R50 million in 2020/21 to R40 million in 2021/22 and the

⁵ See for example http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Government/City_Vision/IDP/Documents/2021_22_IDP.pdf. Page 567

⁶ http://www.durban.gov.za/Resource_Centre/reports/Documents/MediumTermRevenueAndExpenditureFramework2021_22.pdf Pages 32 and 33

⁷ <http://mfma.treasury.gov.za/Documents/03.%20Budget%20Documentation/2020-21/Adopted%20Budgets/01.%20Metros/ETH%20eThekweni/Final%20MediumTerm%20Revenue%20and%20Expenditure%20Framework%202020,2021.pdf>. Pages 34 and 35

capital project for the provision of Community Ablution Blocks has also declined from R30 million in 2020/21 to R20 million in 2021/22 financial year.

The need for services in informal settlements remains serious as the municipality's own record on backlogs show:

Table 2: Basic services backlogs in eThekweni⁸

Basic Service	Existing Backlog (households/dwellings)	Delivery ranges per annum	Timeframe to address based on current funding levels
Sanitation (at 30 June 2020)	310 790	3 000 - 4 000	78 – 104 years
Electricity (at 31 December 2020)	376 367	8 000 - 14 000	27 - 47 years
Refuse removal (at 30 June 2020)	0	1 500 - 2 000	0 years
Roads (at 31 January 2021)	1781 km	10 - 15 km	70 - 105 years
Water (at 30 June 2020)	201 364	4 000 - 5 000	40 – 50 years

Source: eThekweni 2021/22 Integrated Development Plan. Pages 154, 156. Available online http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Government/City_Vision/IDP/Documents/2021_22_IDP.pdf

In addition, the latest Asivikelane data (April 2021) shows that many residents living in eThekweni's informal settlements are without regular access to services:

- 29% of residents reported that their settlement didn't have sufficient water access in the last 7 days,
- 48% of residents reported that the communal toilets in their settlement were not cleaned in the last 7 days, and
- and 32% of residents reported that waste was not collected in the last 7 days.

The data collected through Asivikelane and eThekweni Metro's own assessment, highlight the magnitude of the need and the urgency for basic services in informal settlements. We therefore urge the Metro to increase its funding allocation to incremental services to ensure safe and hygienic living conditions.

4. Budget for and implement an easily accessible fault-reporting and monitoring system

Because the Metro does not have a functional monitoring and fault-reporting system in place there is little accountability for EPWP employees and contractors who work in informal settlements. Furthermore, failure to monitor services at the community level seems to undermine the intended purpose of service provision.

We therefore urge eThekweni to put in place an easily accessible monitoring and fault reporting system, and communicate the details to all informal settlements. Residents need to know who is responsible for each service, where to report faults and what response times to expect. Any repairs to taps and toilets etc. must be addressed efficiently. The Metro must ensure that that high-quality repair and maintenance services are provided so that faults do not reoccur frequently.

5. Invest in social facilitation to meaningfully engage with residents

⁸ Based on eThekweni's 2021/22 IDP, which shows the most recent basic services backlogs. Note the following:

- The backlogs for the different services have been recorded at different points in time
- The backlogs include rural and urban areas, and cover households living in urban informal settlements, as well as households living in backyards and rural households.

The Metro must invest in social facilitation and create functional channels of communication. Ward committees are largely dysfunctional and communities are often not informed about government's plans. Residents are regularly excluded from decisions which affect them and this creates a sense of frustration and helplessness. We know from our experience that working with communities through meaningful participation enhances government's relationship with residents and improves service delivery. We therefore ask eThekweni to set aside resources (funding and staff) to engage residents on a regular and meaningful basis.

6. Protect residents from shack fires and eradicate transit camps

The Metro must protect residents from the risks of living in informal settlements and transit camps. Shack fires are costing people their lives and there is an urgent need for firefighting and fire prevention services and we ask the Metro to budget for this.

Transit camps are also unsafe and precarious spaces, yet the Metro has not indicated its plans to eradicate these camps. This matter requires urgent attention and clear communication about the Metro's plans.