



Submission on Johannesburg Municipality's Draft 2024/25 Budget

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Submitted by: Planact¹, 1to1 Agency of Engagement² and the International Budget Partnership SA³ as part of the Asivikelane Campaign representing informal settlements communities in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality.

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Recommendations

The City of Johannesburg provides Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets as one of the options that constitutes a minimum standard of services, or Level of Service 1 (LoS1). Many informal settlement residents use VIP toilets and have reported significant challenges with these toilets.

Based on an analysis of the Metro's draft 2024/25 budget, we submit the following recommendations for consideration in the final budget, with the main objective to improve access to basic sanitation (LoS1), specifically through improved VIP toilets:

- Increase the allocation for the installation of new basic sanitation at LoS1 to ensure that all informal settlement residents have access to a minimum acceptable standard. The allocation for the number of additional households that are to be provided with access to minimum LoS1 basic sanitation in informal settlements has remained the same since 2022/23.
- Allocate a budget for decommissioning pit chambers and top structures of old VIP toilets in residents' yards and in communal areas, where these have been replaced by new toilets. This is common in many areas and constitutes a health, safety and environmental risk.
- Allocate a budget for the provision of chemical toilets in informal settlements and ensure this information is published in the final budget.
- Ring-fence a repairs and maintenance allocation for informal settlement basic services infrastructure. Specifically include a dedicated allocation for Johannesburg Water (JW) to

¹ Planact is a non-profit organisation based in Johannesburg, working on eliminating the exclusion of vulnerable communities in local government processes.

² 1to1 – Agency of Engagement is a non-profit social enterprise that seeks to support the forces that are positively and systematically shaping the way that Southern African cities are seen, made and managed towards a spatially just future.

³ IBP South Africa is a non-profit organisation whose goal is improved service delivery to poor communities through larger budget allocations and more effective and efficient budget implementation. We pursue this goal by supporting grassroots campaigns that strengthen and integrate the oversight and accountability system.

take over responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of VIP toilet top structures in informal settlements. Currently, JW is only responsible for emptying VIP toilets. While the City funds and provides top structures, it does not repair and maintain these – this leaves many of these toilets in a dilapidated and dangerous state.

- Set aside an allocation for the desludging of both VIP and self-dug pit toilets in informal settlements. Many residents resort to digging their own pits as they either have no access to municipal-provided sanitation, or because the VIPs that the municipality has provided are dilapidated and no longer safe to use.
- Set aside a dedicated budget for educating the recipients of new VIP Toilets as well as users of previously installed VIPs. Sharing information with residents on how important it is to only use toilet paper and not throw any other material in the pits, for example, will contribute to the longevity of the pits and toilets. Publish JW's draft business plan for 2024/25 to ensure that communities know about the entity's plans for the provision of sanitation in the coming year and are better informed to make submissions on the draft budget.

Detailed submission

Introduction

The City of Johannesburg Sanitation Policy (2021) commits the City to address its vast sanitation backlog and to eradicate self-dug pit toilets. According to the policy, the Metro's minimum standard of service is Level of Service 1 (LoS1) and includes Ventilated Improved Pit Toilets, which are widely used in informal settlements across the Metro. The provision of chemical toilets, at a ratio of 7 households per toilet, is considered a nominal service and interim solution.⁴

We have assessed the allocations in the City's draft 2024/25 budget for the provision of basic sanitation and, specifically, its allocations for the provision of VIP toilets.

1. The challenges with VIPs

Since the inception of the Asivikelane Initiative⁵ in 2020, Asivikelane communities in Johannesburg have collected detailed evidence about the state of sanitation delivery in the City's informal settlements. In August 2023, 20% of residents surveyed by Asivikelane used VIP toilets, while 14% used self-dug pit toilets, which also require emptying. 43% of residents surveyed used chemical toilets, the City's nominal standard of

⁴ The City of Johannesburg Sanitation Policy (2021) Target 3.0.1

⁵ In March 2020, the International Budget Partnership South Africa (IBP South Africa) and its civil society partner organisations launched the Asivikelane Initiative. This initiative gives a voice to informal settlement residents in South Africa's major cities who face severe basic service shortages. It supports informal settlement communities to monitor the delivery of water, sanitation and refuse collection services and to engage with their municipality about these services.

<https://asivikelane.org/about/>

service, while 2% of residents had no toilet. This shows that the city has a long way to go to achieve its own minimum standard of LoS1.⁶

When surveyed in August last year, 64% of residents who used VIPs said their toilets were unusable: toilet seats and covers were missing, seats and seat covers were broken, and the concrete slabs which cover the pits at the back of the latrines were broken or unstable. There was insufficient lighting and the doors could not lock from the inside. This has a major impact on the safety of women and other vulnerable groups who have to use these toilets. These issues have been consistently reported by residents, and need to be addressed by the Metro.

2. Budget allocations that can impact the provision of sanitation

2.1 New Basic Sanitation at LoS1 in informal settlements

Over the last three years, the allocation set aside for installing new basic sanitation in informal settlements has remained unchanged at R54,3 million. Previously, this indicator in JW’s Business Plans provides for the delivery of VIP toilets, pour flush toilets and ablution blocks.⁷

2.1.1 Additional Households Provided with access to basic sanitation

| | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | % change |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| [R'000] | Adopted budget | Adopted budget | Draft budget | |
| Number of additional households provided with access to basic sanitation at minimum LoS1 in informal settlements. | 54,340 | 54,340 | 54, 340 | 0% |

Source: Page 314 of the Adopted 2023/24 Integrated Development Plan and Page 243 of the Draft 2024/25 IDP

In light of the estimated sanitation backlog of 115,783 households, and the City’s plans to eradicate (non-VIP) pit toilets, it is concerning that the City has not increased its allocation for basic sanitation.

The Metro also does not share in its draft budget and IDP the number of toilets it plans to deliver, nor which settlements will benefit. Access to this information will help communities monitor the delivery of new services to their settlements.

It is also not clear whether this allocation includes funds for the removal of **old VIP toilets** when new VIP toilets are installed. This should be a priority – evidence collected by Asivikelane indicates that some residents still have old VIP toilets in their yards after new VIPs have been installed. This poses a massive health and safety risk to those residents, who are not equipped to remove the old pits.



⁶ Asivikelane 38 (Own data and calculations)

⁷ The draft business plan for Johannesburg Water for 2024/25 had not been published by the time of commenting on the draft 2024/25 budget.

Repairs and Maintenance of Sanitation Infrastructure should include VIP Top Structures

It is concerning that, despite a massive need for infrastructure maintenance, the total repairs and maintenance budget for Johannesburg has been reduced. Of particular concern are the decreases for sanitation and water reticulation infrastructure. We assume that these allocations include funds for the repair and maintenance of informal settlement taps and toilets.

2.2.1 Repairs and Maintenance

| | 2023/24 | | Draft 2024/25 MTREF Framework | | | Increase from 2023/24 adjusted to 2024/25 draft |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| [R'000] | Adopted budget | Adjusted budget | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2027/28 | |
| Total Repairs and Maintenance | 5 720 691 | 6 242 550 | 6 085 423 | 6 304 995 | 6 527 589 | -2.5% |
| Water supply Infrastructure | 875 661 | 1 155 992 | 1 129 799 | 1 147 417 | 1 165 130 | -2.3% |
| Sanitation infrastructure | 280 505 | 322 891 | 312 636 | 326 685 | 341 359 | -3.2% |
| | | | | | | |
| R & M as % of PPE | 6.7 | 7.4 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.3 | |

Source: Draft Medium Term Budget 2024/25-2026/27, pages 17 and 18.

These decreases can have a relatively large impact on informal settlements; a broken tap or toilet in an informal settlement can mean that residents do not have access to water or sanitation at all, despite this infrastructure being provided in their settlement.

As this infrastructure is crucial, we would like to see a dedicated and ring-fenced allocation for repairs and maintenance of basic services infrastructure in informal settlements.

Additionally, we call on the City to allocate funding for Johannesburg Water to ensure that the entity can take over the repairs and maintenance of VIP top structures in informal settlements. Currently, Johannesburg Water's approach is that they empty the pits, but they leave the responsibility for repairs and maintenance of VIP top structures to residents.

Residents are generally not equipped to fix the top structures, especially when the concrete slabs covering the pits break. Some residents have also indicated that, when they repair the slabs themselves, there have been incidents where contractors refuse to drain the pits as the structure no longer looks like the original VIP that the City installed. This then results in residents' VIPs not being drained, which is a service the Metro provides for free.

The City does not publish its allocation for the desludging of VIP toilets by outsourced service providers. We ask the City to publish this allocation. We also urge the City to consider funding the desludging of self-dug or self-maintained pits. This will ensure that those residents have access to sanitation while waiting on the City to provide them with the LoS1 standard of sanitation.

2.3 Allocate funds for VIP user education to ensure longevity

The Metro should allocate funds for the education of residents using both old and new VIP toilets. Residents have indicated that they have never received proper information on how to use the toilets, specifically about which materials can be thrown into the pits. Such education can extend the lifespan of VIP toilets.