

# The Witness

## Msunduzi gets Cogta roasting

*Cogta revealed that the City's grant funding is in jeopardy if they do not get their house in order.*



Msunduzi Municipality stands to lose an undisclosed amount of its grant funding due to a lack of accountability. Photo: Nwabiso Dlamini

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Msunduzi Municipality got a roasting from the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) acting chief director for infrastructure on Thursday.

A presentation by Chuleza Jama, Cogta acting chief director for infrastructure, revealed that the City's grant funding is in jeopardy if they do not get their house in order.

Jama painted a worrying picture about how the City handles its projects and said Msunduzi has not been ready to report on their projects and grant funding by the time they were supposed to each July.

Jama also revealed, in a presentation, that the last audit of bridges in the Msunduzi road network was done partly in 2015, while the correct practice is that all bridges are inspected and monitored on an annual basis.

“At the moment there are no plans for the storm water system for the CBD of Pietermaritzburg. The outdated plans that did exist, were sent away for scanning. Unfortunately they were never returned and there is also no electronic version.

“This poses a risk because it is impossible to maintain a system if you don’t have a record of what exists.

“The effectiveness of a storm water system needs to be reviewed from time to time due to changes in runoff patterns caused by changes in infrastructure.”

It said knowledge of the system will also make monitoring and maintenance easier and also help with the pinpointing of leakage from the sewer reticulation system into the storm water system.

**Msunduzi remains in the risk-adjusted red zone. Msunduzi will have the MIG funding stopped in terms of Section 19. Cash flow projections on the acceleration plan are no longer credible or relevant as the municipality continues to be unable to meet projections.**

“The difficulty for me is the unrealistic projections, for example you [Msunduzi] are talking about [spending] R8 million per week and you are making that commitment to Exco. Will you be able to honour that commitment? I’d like to plead with honourable councillors and officials of Msunduzi that the right time to spend funding is July, August and September.”

Cogta recommended that Msunduzi embraces and adheres to the risk adjusted approach and the prioritisation of eight percent of grant funds towards existing infrastructure in response to identified challenges and implementation of remedial measures.

“Projects need to be supported and implemented on time. Msunduzi is performing poorly on its own set standards and it is not meeting its projections. The municipal infrastructure funds (MIG) are threatened due to poor performance, and there’s a high number of projects that need to be cleared from the system. We are one of the worst-performing municipalities in regards to data cleansing,” said Jama during her presentation at the city hall on Thursday.

She said cash flow management at the municipality was another challenge in that “each and every” month Msunduzi never meets the projections.

She said they have reported this to the management committee but were unable to explain the amount involved in terms of funds which are under threat because projections have not been met.

Municipal manager Lulamile Mapholoba said in terms of the data cleansing issue, some projects will be decommissioned.

**For some of them we might have to find funding to complete them. But we are doing everything in our power to ensure that we are not losing any money that is due to us.**

Deputy mayor Mxolisi Mkhize said they have summoned all project champions to the infrastructure portfolio committee so that each individual can report and account in the presence of the general manager and senior managers on how far they have gone with individual projects.

**On Wednesday we will be going to ... the Eastwood substation and the Copesville reservoir to see what progress has been made.**

The opposition DA and EFF noted the presentation, but with reservations.

The DA’s Ross Strachan said his biggest concern was that there were still the same people sitting around the same table making decisions and running projects that have never been dealt with.

**Some of these projects have been sitting with no progress for a very long time in each ward across the city. It’s also concerning that there has been no continuity in terms of senior managers holding office, with people coming and going especially city managers that have changed hands in the last five years.**

He said he hoped Mapholoba will stay with the city for a long time and start “changing the culture that we have created in this municipality where there is no accountability and politics have infiltrated the administration”.

EFF councillor Bongani Mbona said electricity theft has become a huge challenge for the municipality. Mbona said there were homes that were stealing electricity from the streetlights, and that the city had to come up with a plan to curb this.

