



SEKHUKHUNE
District Municipality

SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

NEWSLETTER

Quarter : 0 1



**Executive Mayor
Cllr Minah Bahula**

MEGA Investment

Sanitation for dignity

Giant Steps to the Future

Smart water meter reading

**WOMEN'S
MONTH**



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EMBRACING OUR MEGATUDE: MEGA INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A RESILIENT ECONOMY FOR ALL

By Lemson Moropjane, Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the MEGA INFRASTRUCTURE NEWSLETTER, a publication born at the intersection of vision and action. This edition arrives during an important national moment, Women's Month, celebrated under the fitting theme: *"Building Resilient Economies for All."* This theme speaks directly to our mission, as we reflect not only on the scale of the infrastructure projects shaping Sekhukhune District, but also on their deeper purpose - inclusive, people-centred economic transformation.

Our newsletter title, *"Go Mega or Go Home,"* may sound bold, but it reflects a bold District. Sekhukhune is in motion, infrastructure in action, and we are witnessing the early fruits of a long-awaited developmental leap. Roads, water networks, energy systems, health facilities, and agro-processing corridors are being laid not only as structures, but as foundations for a new social contract. One that centres equity, opportunity, and empowerment for every resident, especially women, who remain the backbone of our local economy.

This edition is a celebration of our *MEGAtude*, a mindset and movement grounded in determination, progress, and unity. And during Women's Month, it is also a tribute to the unseen labour, entrepreneurial ingenuity, and community leadership of women across Sekhukhune who continue to build and rebuild our communities, often with limited resources, but never with limited resolve.

As Editor-in-Chief, I have had the privilege of observing first-hand how the megaprojects we profile are doing more than transforming the physical landscape, they are opening doors. From the strategic upgrade of the R555 and the De Hoop Dam corridor to the expansion of access through the Moloto Road and new hospital developments in Burgersfort, these initiatives are lifting the ceiling on what is possible for our youth, our small businesses, and our women-led enterprises.

Our infrastructural journey is deeply interconnected with the economic participation of women. Whether through procurement opportunities, labour in construction, enterprise development, or tourism spinoffs, our approach must be *gender-responsive*. We cannot speak of resilient economies without acknowledging the historic exclusion of women and the urgent need to integrate them at every level, from planning and design to ownership and leadership.

But the road to resilience is not without challenges. These projects require coordinated governance, active community engagement, and unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability. We must guard against disruptions, mismanagement, and missed opportunities by ensuring that every voice counts, especially those historically left behind.

Our MEGA INFRASTRUCTURE NEWSLETTER is therefore more than a showcase of steel, bricks, and budgets, it is a platform for reflection, dialogue, and mobilisation. It aims to inform, inspire, and include, to make the work of progress visible and to invite all stakeholders, residents, SMMEs, civil society, youth, and traditional leaders, to be part of this historic chapter.

In this and future editions, we will unpack how each project aligns with Sekhukhune's develop mission predicated on robust infrastructure spreading the strategic benefits across the District, South Africa's National Development Plan, and the call for climate-smart, gender-equal, and digitally enabled infrastructure development. We will spotlight change-makers, profile township and rural entrepreneurs, and feature voices from the ground whose insights enrich our developmental narrative.

To the women of Sekhukhune, positively impacted by the District-wide infrastructure rollout through employment, participating in value chains and other forms of contribution made by your farms, your spaza shops, your cooperatives, your home-based businesses, your activism, and your care work are all part of the economy we seek to build. It is our duty to ensure that this infrastructure revolution reflects your labour, responds to your needs, and rewards your contribution.

In conclusion, let us embrace the MEGAtude with pride, purpose, and persistence. Let us use this moment to unite across sectors and stand in solidarity with women as we build forward better. Sekhukhune is rising, and with each bridge we construct and each road we tar, let us also build bridges of inclusion, and roads to resilience.

Go Mega, or go home.

Warm regards,

Lemson Moropjane
Editor-in-Chief-Head of Communications
MEGA INFRASTRUCTURE NEWSLETTER

GIANT STEPS TO THE FUTURE



Cllr Minah Bahula
Executive Mayor

It is with great pride and unwavering confidence that I welcome the communities of Sekhukhune District to a defining moment in our journey of growth and renewal. As we commemorate Women's Month under the theme "Building Resilient Economies for All", we are called to reflect deeply on the role of women in shaping our economy, while embracing the bold transformation unfolding across our district.

This year, our celebration coincides with a wave of catalytic development, the rollout of mega infrastructure and economic projects designed to unlock opportunity, stimulate local economies, and create sustainable livelihoods. These are not just physical developments; they are acts of social and economic justice. They speak to the dreams of our mothers, the resilience of our grandmothers, and the aspirations of our daughters who seek to inherit a district where dignity, prosperity, and equality are not abstract ideals, but lived realities.

For the past 30 years, South Africa has walked the long road of democracy, with Sekhukhune District making measurable strides in health, education, service delivery, and infrastructure. But we must go further. The legacy of inequality remains etched in the economic landscape, particularly for

women in rural areas. That is why our *Vision 2030* is anchored in inclusive development, industrialisation that empowers women, infrastructure that uplifts communities, and policies that do not leave the most vulnerable behind.

Our mega projects span key sectors, roads, water, renewable energy, digital technology, tourism, and agriculture. These are not just investments in economic growth, they are investments in people, especially women and youth who are often first to feel the pain of poverty, but also first to rise with the promise of opportunity. We are intentional about this: development must be gender-responsive. It must be community-led. It must be future-focused.

We are seeing women entrepreneurs breaking ground in farming cooperatives, eco-tourism ventures, artisanal trades, and digital start-ups. We are supporting these champions through district-level enterprise funding, training, and inclusion in procurement and supply chains. As the district government, we will continue to implement policy reforms and support structures that empower women not only as beneficiaries, but as builders and decision-makers in our economy.

But none of this can be achieved

alone. To build resilient economies for all, we must harness the collective power of our communities, men and women, elders and youth, traditional leaders and innovators, civil society and government. Let us move forward with unity, purpose, and a shared commitment to protecting these gains.

Every bridge we construct, every power grid we extend, every development node we unlock, must be seen as an inheritance. We are not merely building for ourselves; we are preparing a better Sekhukhune for those who will come after us. Let us not miss this moment.

To the women of Sekhukhune: your leadership, your wisdom, and your courage are not just valued, they are essential. This Women's Month, we honour you not with words alone, but with action. Let this foreword be a declaration that your place is not on the periphery of development, but at its very centre. The future belongs to all of us, but it will be carried, in many ways, by you.

Let us rise together. Let us protect our gains. Let us build boldly, inclusively, and sustainably. The future is now, and it is ours to shape.

Cllr Minah Bahula
Executive Mayor
Sekhukhune District Municipality



Municipal Manager
Meshack Kgwale

Building Better and Bolder Sekhukhune

As we look to the future of Sekhukhune District, we must remain committed to leveraging

public mega infrastructure as a key driver of industrialization and multifaceted development. In keeping with our vision of building a more connected, sustainable, and dynamic community, our focus is on enhancing public infrastructure that will support economic growth, promote inclusivity, and bolster social well-being.

We are proud to say that Sekhukhune continues to maintain its reputation as a cutting-edge, community-focused municipality. As the needs of the communities we serve evolve, so must our strategies and actions. Our aim is to ensure that the infrastructure projects we undertake are not only functional but also empower local residents, create meaningful economic opportunities, and leave a lasting legacy. The success of our infrastructure megaprojects depends not only on the quality of the engineering but also on how effectively we engage with and manage the perceptions of the communities impacted by these developments.

From pre-construction to the operation phase, understanding the experiences and concerns of the communities is critical to the success of any project. Communication, transparency, and responsiveness to community feedback are the cornerstones of creating a positive perception and ensuring that these projects meet the expectations of local stakeholders. As such, we are committed to utilizing modern tools, including social media, to engage with the public and keep them informed about the progress and impact of these projects throughout their lifecycle.

Furthermore, the construction of these large-scale infrastructure projects generates valuable employment opportunities and promotes broad-based black economic empowerment. These initiatives contribute significantly to the goals of the National Development Plan (NDP), which envisions a South Africa that is inclusive, competitive, and resilient. The National Infrastructure Plan 2050 (NIP 2050) provides us with a strategic framework to guide infrastructure delivery, address institutional blockages, and support the realization of the NDP's vision of inclusive growth. By aligning with the NIP 2050,

we aim to promote dynamism in infrastructure delivery and create stronger institutions that can drive long-term success.

One area where we are particularly focused is water infrastructure. Access to clean, reliable water is a fundamental aspect of building a strong, inclusive economy and a healthy environment. As the NIP 2050 emphasizes, proactive, evidence-based water resource planning will be key to achieving our water infrastructure vision. We are committed to ensuring that water projects are financially sustainable, while also addressing the need for effective regulatory oversight and environmental protection.

We are also mindful of the progress being made by SANRAL in road infrastructure projects across the country. The Sekhukhune District will benefit directly from this work, as the development of an improved road network will open new opportunities for local businesses, improve connectivity, and enhance the overall mobility of our residents.

Our approach to infrastructure is underpinned by a commitment to value for money, efficiency, and sustainability. We recognize the importance of adopting a full-life-cycle planning approach that considers the long-term impacts of our investments. This approach will help us design projects that meet the needs of the community, minimize risk, and deliver better value for money. Partnerships with the private sector will play a crucial role in this, as they offer expertise, funding, and innovation that will drive the success of our infrastructure initiatives.

As we continue to build better and bolder, we will prioritize the development of a robust national energy grid capable of integrating renewable technologies and ensuring a reliable, low-cost energy supply for our communities. The importance of energy efficiency, along with the development of storage solutions for renewable energy, will be central to achieving the vision of a sustainable future for Sekhukhune District.

Together, we are laying the foundation for a prosperous and resilient Sekhukhune District. In embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and prioritizing the needs of our communities, we will continue to build infrastructure that supports the growth of our economy, improves the quality of life for our residents, and strengthens our position as a forward-thinking municipality on the national stage.

Let us remain bold in our ambition and steadfast in our commitment to creating a brighter future for Sekhukhune District.

Smart Meter Reading brings digital transformation to service delivery experience



On 11 July 2025, Sekhukhune District Municipality launched the Smart Meter Reading campaign at Tubatse Crossing Mall in Burgersfort, marking a major step toward digital service delivery and water efficiency in Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality, one of the fastest-growing economic hubs in Sekhukhuneland.

The launch was officiated by the Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr Minah Bahula, who, in her address to the 200-strong audience, which included revenue operators, ward councillors, and ward committee members, said:

“Sekhukhune District Municipality is deeply honoured to officially launch the Smart Meter Reading System in Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality, a transformative step in our district’s journey toward smart, people-centred governance. This forward-looking initiative introduces user-friendly, tech-enabled water meters that will empower our residents, particularly in growing towns like Burgersfort, to monitor and manage their water usage in real time.”

Cllr Bahula emphasized that Sekhukhune is a water-scarce region, and this reality demands bold innovation. The smart meter system forms a core part of the broader strategy to promote water conservation while significantly improving service delivery.

“We are modernising how we manage water, reducing losses through real-time data, and ensuring that our infrastructure operates at maximum efficiency,” she stated.

Bahula added that one of the most important benefits is the enhancement of revenue collection through accurate billing.

“When residents receive clear, fair, and verifiable accounts, they are more willing to pay, fulfilling the Batho Pele Principle of *Value for Money*. Trust in our services builds stronger cooperation between the municipality and communities,” she explained.

The launch of the smart meter reading was welcomed by the local business owners for its groundbreaking innovation. Mr Ahmed Suliman, a businessman who has been trading in Burgersfort for over 15 years, shared his personal relief:

“I’ve suffered inaccurate billing and unfair estimates. Since the smart meter was installed, billing is spot-on, transparent, and stress-free. For once, I know I’m paying exactly for what I use. It’s a relief and a win for all of us.”

Tebogo Tebele, owner of a local guest house in Burgersfort, also spoke about the positive impact: “I’ve faced years of frustration with estimated bills and inconsistent meter readings that hurt my business planning. Since switching to a smart meter, billing is accurate, and I can monitor consumption in real time. This transparency has restored my trust in the system. I no longer fear surprise costs or service disruptions. It also helps me plan better, conserve energy, and run my business more efficiently. Smart meters are not just about convenience, they’re about





fairness, accountability, and future-proofing local businesses like mine in rural municipalities. This is real progress.”

Cllr Eddie Maila, Mayor of Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality, expressed pride in hosting the District-wide pilot launch:

“We are proud to have been chosen to host the launch of the Smart Meter Reading System right here in Burgersfort, a town that continues to defy limitations and show what rural innovation truly looks like. This is not just a technological milestone; it’s an economic imperative. In small towns like ours, where local enterprises, guest houses, retail shops, service stations, and informal traders are the lifeblood of the economy, accurate and transparent utility billing is critical.”

Mayor Maila further explained that the choice of Burgersfort as the pilot launch site was strategic because Burgersfort is more than just a mining town, it is the future rural metro of Sekhukhuneland, as envisioned in our City Development Strategy. Its phenomenal growth, youthful energy, and

natural progressiveness make it the ideal launchpad for smart innovations. With smart meters, our local businesses are empowered to plan better, save more, and operate efficiently, while the municipality improves its service delivery and revenue management.

“This system aligns with our vision of becoming a smart, service-oriented municipality where every citizen, from the informal trader to the industrialist, can thrive. Burgersfort deserves this. It is ready. The time to digitise rural development is now, and it starts here in Fetakgomo Tubatse.” Added Mayor Maila

Executive Mayor Bahula thanked all business and residential users of water services for embracing the Smart Meter System and concluded with a powerful message:

“Smart meters place control in the hands of the people. They mark a shift in how we govern, from reactive to proactive, from manual to digital. This is how we prepare Sekhukhune District for a sustainable, inclusive future.”

Overcoming Water Delivery Challenges with MIG

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN WATER PROJECTS

August, celebrated nationally as Women’s Month, carries a theme that could not be more timely for Sekhukhune District: *“Building Resilient Economies for All.”* In many ways, resilience begins at the most basic level, with access to water. For Sekhukhune District Municipality (SDM), overcoming water infrastructure delivery challenges is not only a matter of service provision, but also a step toward enabling sustainable livelihoods, economic inclusion, and dignity for all, especially women who bear the brunt of water scarcity in our rural communities.

As the district continues to battle persistent drought conditions and an uneven distribution of water services, SDM has begun to accelerate investments in infrastructure that can change the tide. The Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) remains a cornerstone of this response. Through targeted planning, this year’s MIG-supported water projects aim to both unlock existing infrastructure bottlenecks and stimulate a more inclusive economy, one where women, youth, and marginalized communities can thrive.

Executive Mayor Cllr Minah Bahula has been clear in her public engagements: “Access to clean, reliable water is not a privilege, it’s a right, and it’s also the foundation for any resilient economy. Women in Sekhukhune must no longer be

burdened by walking long distances to fetch water when the tools to resolve this lie within our collective reach.”

This commitment comes at a critical time. Many communities, including Tsakane (near Papong Primary School), Ga-Rantho, and Ga-Maphopha, still depend on private water vendors or unreliable water trucks. The situation has made basic tasks, cooking, cleaning, farming, and small-scale enterprise, difficult, particularly for women who often shoulder these responsibilities. Addressing this is not just an infrastructure priority, it’s an economic and gender justice imperative.

At the heart of this renewed water rollout is the De Hoop Water Treatment Works, a long-anticipated component of the 2014-launched De Hoop Dam project. The dam, with a capacity of 347 million cubic meters, was designed to supply water to over 170 villages across the district. While its potential has remained largely untapped due to delayed connections and uncompleted pipelines, the 2024/2025 infrastructure budget is strategically aimed at activating this vital resource.

Key projects receiving attention this financial year include:

- Upgrading of the De Hoop Water Treatment Works
- Lebalelo South Connector Pipes Reticulation
- Groblersdal-Lukau Phase 1 & 2
- Moutse East & West Water Reticulation (Phases 1 & 2)
- Mampuru Bulk Water Scheme
- Olifantspoort South Regional Water Supply Phase 6
- NSD07 Regional Water Scheme



VIEW of the completed Malekana Steel Bridge

These initiatives, funded by both conditional grants and the equitable share allocation, signal a comprehensive and multi-village approach to water access. But importantly, this strategy includes rehabilitation of stalled and abandoned projects, an often overlooked piece of the puzzle. Projects such as Mooihoek Water Supply and Lebalelo Central Sub-schemes will be re-activated and completed, bringing water to communities long left behind.

While these interventions are promising, they are not without hurdles. SDM remains heavily reliant on government funding, with 90% of the 2024/2025 R1.9 billion revenue budget sourced from national transfers. Low revenue collection rates and rising debt from consumers remain risks to sustainability. Thus, while MIG offers the necessary financial boost, long-term resilience will require SDM to diversify its revenue base, improve billing systems, and foster public trust.

In the context of Women's Month, the broader message is clear: Building resilient economies starts with building resilient infrastructure. And in rural districts like Sekhukhune, water

is both the literal and symbolic starting point. Whether it's women running agricultural cooperatives, young girls missing school due to water-fetching duties, or female-owned informal businesses, the ripple effects of improved water infrastructure cannot be overstated.

As SDM works to deliver on its promises, transparent communication, consistent project monitoring, and community engagement must form the backbone of implementation. The municipality's renewed drive, underpinned by both technical expertise and political will, is an opportunity to rewrite the district's development story.

This Women's Month, let us honour the women who keep Sekhukhune's economy and households running, even in the face of hardship. Let us resolve to provide them, and all our people, with the tools to thrive. Through strategic infrastructure, we can build not just access to water, but access to opportunity, equality, and lasting prosperity.

Indeed, Sekhukhune is going Mega, and women must be at the centre of that journey.



Visible progress is being made at the new bridge in the Sekhukhune district





Mega Upgrade for Moloto Road, connecting Mpumalanga, Gauteng, and Limpopo

In a major boost to the road infrastructure of South Africa, the R573 Moloto Road is undergoing a transformative upgrade, part of the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) initiative to improve critical road networks. Connecting Gauteng to Mpumalanga and Limpopo, this vital road serves as a major transit route for over 60,000 daily commuters and is a key catalyst for economic growth in the region.

The upgrade of the 137-kilometer stretch of the Moloto Road, which runs from Pretoria through Mpumalanga and Limpopo to Marble Hall, is progressing steadily. SANRAL has committed a significant R3.7-billion investment over the course of five to six years, focusing on the Mpumalanga and Limpopo sections that impact Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale Local Municipalities. While the Gauteng section remains in the design phase, the Mpumalanga and Limpopo areas are seeing tangible progress.

Work Package 2 in the Mpumalanga section is already 75% complete, with an expected completion date of June 2024. Meanwhile, in Limpopo, Work Package A2 is nearing completion at 95%, with a scheduled finish date in February 2024. Once all phases are completed, the Moloto Road will be a safer, more efficient route for local communities and commuters, promoting mobility and connectivity between three provinces.

Key upgrades along the route include the widening of the road into dual-lane carriageways, installation of four traffic circles (three in Mpumalanga and one in Limpopo), and the construction of light masts to enhance nighttime visibility. These improvements aim to reduce accidents and improve overall road safety. Additionally, agricultural underpasses and cattle creeps will provide safe passage for livestock, eliminating dangerous interactions with traffic.

SANRAL's ambitious project aligns with its broader vision to stimulate economic development and create jobs.

Approximately 12,500 jobs are expected to be generated throughout the duration of the project. Notably, 30% of the project value is being allocated to Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), with a focus on empowering women, youth, people with disabilities, and military veterans. The project's inclusive approach underscores SANRAL's commitment to transforming the construction industry by prioritizing the involvement of previously marginalized groups.

In Mpumalanga, SANRAL's efforts are also set to benefit the Thembisile Hani Municipality, where R315-million is being invested to further uplift the local economy. These investments are expected to create over 900 direct jobs in the area, driving local economic activity and providing opportunities for community growth.

While the construction of the road progresses, local stakeholders continue to play a crucial role in supporting SANRAL's objectives. Efforts to prevent land encroachment and educate local traders on the risks of illegal occupation have been key in minimizing delays and ensuring the safety of surrounding communities.

The R573 Moloto Road upgrade is part of SANRAL's larger initiative to enhance South Africa's road infrastructure and support the country's growing economic potential. With a national budget of R21.5-billion allocated annually for the maintenance and improvement of SANRAL's vast road network, the Moloto Road is just one example of how strategic investment in transport infrastructure can unlock economic growth, increase business confidence, and improve the quality of life for local residents.

As the project nears completion, communities can look forward to a safer, more efficient road network that supports both daily commutes and long-term regional development.



Transforming Communities through MEGA infrastructure development

Transforming Communities through Mega Infrastructure Development Malope Road Breakthrough Brings Polokwane Closer to Phokwane and Monsterlus

In the rural heart of Limpopo's Sekhukhune District, a long-standing dream is finally becoming reality. The Malope Road upgrade project, officially known as the D4260 Malope to Phokwane Road, is no longer just a promise, it is a tangible transformation that is reshaping the lives and aspirations of thousands in the region.

Undertaken by Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL), the project has seen the first 2.5 km phase completed, with newly paved surfaces replacing previously hazardous gravel roads. With an investment of R3.5 million, the project is unlocking access, opportunity, and progress for the communities of Malope, Phokwane, Monsterlus, and beyond.

The importance of Road D4260 cannot be overstated. It connects residents to Polokwane, Limpopo's capital city and administrative heartland, enabling faster travel to essential government services, healthcare, education, and commercial centres.

"Polokwane feels closer now," says Boitumelo Mokoena, a local schoolteacher from Phokwane. "For the first time, I can consider attending workshops or shopping in the city without worrying about the condition of the road."

What was once a dusty, deteriorated stretch of gravel is now an emerging corridor of economic possibility. Reliable transport routes mean reduced travel times and safer journeys, especially for schoolchildren, the elderly, and those seeking employment

or business opportunities in urban centres.

This progress did not come easily. For years, the people of Makhuduthamaga and Ephraim Mogale municipalities tirelessly advocated for the upgrade of Road D4260. Budgeted for repeatedly yet left untouched, the community's frustrations mounted.

"It was a fight," recalls *Thabiso Maepa*, a community leader. "We protested, marched, and wrote letters. Eventually, government and RAL heard us."

Their perseverance has paid off, with the road now serving as a beacon of what's possible when communities are heard, and public infrastructure delivers.

Regional Road Revolution

The Malope project is just one part of a broader infrastructure upgrade sweeping across Sekhukhune District. Several critical road projects are near completion, including:

- D856 Dennilton to Moteti (R573) – 100% complete
- D4356 Arabie to Petwane – 100% complete
- P51/3 Groblersdal to Stoffberg – 99% complete
- D2923 Dennilton to Siyabuswa – 95% complete
- D2484 R555 Tukakgomo to Mapodile – 94% complete
- D4240 Maseven Road – 73% complete
- D4150 Bothashoek to Praktiseer – 68% complete

Designs are also finalized or progressing for other key roads like D2219 Ga-Moloi to Ga-Malekana, D4250 Apel to Mogalatsane, and D1296 Steelpoort to Riba Cross, indicating a concerted regional effort to modernize infrastructure.

With Sekhukhune increasingly positioned as Limpopo's emerging economic hub, thanks to agriculture, mining, tourism, and growing commercial activity, good roads are essential. The Malope road upgrade is not just about tarring a road; it's about unlocking the full potential of the district. Improved roads draw in investors, enable reliable logistics, and stimulate trade links with Gauteng and Mpumalanga. They also reduce transport costs for farmers and small businesses, while giving entrepreneurs access to wider markets.

RAL and provincial government officials have reaffirmed their commitment to inclusive, quality infrastructure

development, seeing it as key to addressing inequality and underdevelopment in rural Limpopo.

Looking Ahead: A Road to Transformation

For the people of Malope, Phokwane, and Monsterlus, Road D4260 is more than a road – it is a symbol of progress and possibility. Community members, business owners, and youth now have a pathway, literally and figuratively, to a better future.

As the tarmac stretches forward, so do the hopes of those it serves. The Malope road breakthrough is a clear reminder that infrastructure is not just about connecting places, it's about transforming lives.



Mega Industrialisation: The Rise of Fetakgomo Tubatse SEZ

Beneath the rust-coloured hills of the mineral-rich Sekhukhune District, an ambitious industrial future is taking shape. Where mining towns once buzzed with extractive urgency, a new vision for economic renewal is unfolding, one that could define South Africa's industrial trajectory for decades. The Fetakgomo Tubatse Special Economic Zone (FTSEZ) is not merely an infrastructure project. It is an audacious attempt to turn Limpopo's dormant mineral wealth and energy potential into an integrated, future-facing economy.

On April 10, 2025, the vision took a decisive step forward. Limpopo Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba presided over a public participation session in Steelpoort, aimed at gathering community input for the formal designation of the FTSEZ. The event, while procedural on paper, was symbolic of South Africa's evolving approach to economic development—one grounded in inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability.

"This is no longer a dream," Premier Ramathuba told a gathering of traditional leaders, local businesspeople, and mining executives. "It is now a public process, a people's project, and a transformative force for the district and the country."

The Fetakgomo Tubatse Special Economic Zone (FTSEZ) is set to redefine South Africa's industrial and energy landscape. Strategically positioned within the mineral-rich Sekhukhune District in Limpopo, the 1,220-hectare zone is an ambitious step toward industrialisation, mineral beneficiation, and green energy development. With a multi-phased implementation plan, FTSEZ is on track to become a world-class industrial hub, anchoring South Africa's just transition to a low-carbon economy.

FTSEZ Implementation Strategy is outlined in three phases which are Phase 1 (West of R555): Development of the 36-hectare Mining Integrated Supply Park (MISP), Establishment of input manufacturing suppliers and a green vehicle components cluster, and preparation of 280 hectares for industrial tenants. Phase 2 (East of R555): Bulk services provision, Infrastructure for a 980-hectare industrial precinct, Investment in renewable energy, smelting, refining, and chrome processing plants. Phase 3: Development of a logistics hub for regional and international trade, Establishment of a 4IR-driven Logistics Hub Station to streamline exports.

Already, six key tenants have committed to investments in chrome beneficiation, hydrogen energy components, electric vehicles, solar energy, and pharmaceuticals, cementing FTSEZ's status as an industrial powerhouse.

As part of its brand visibility and investment mobilisation marketing the FTSEZ's opted for spotlight as the bronze sponsor for African Energy Week (AEW). This strategic engagement underscores the SEZ's role in integrating energy and mining to drive industrialisation. AEW

provides a critical platform for deal-making in Africa's energy sector, aligning with FTSEZ's objective of attracting sustainable investment into mineral beneficiation and green energy solutions.

With 10 investment and development partners and eight projects in the pipeline, the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment, and Tourism has allocated R35 million toward development. At AEW 2024, FTSEZ will showcase its investment opportunities and infrastructure milestones to global investors.

FTSEZ is expected to benefit over one million people in Limpopo by centralising upstream and downstream mineral value chains. The industrial zone will feature Fuel cell plants, a platinum refinery, stainless steel and magnetite processing plants, fabricated metal products, machinery and rubber product manufacturing, mining equipment and components, supporting these industries, FTSEZ is investing in renewable energy projects, including solar, battery storage, biodiesel, and hydrogen production, reinforcing South Africa's transition to clean energy.

Critical Infrastructure and Development Projects aligned to FTSEZ and leveraging multi-billion-rand infrastructure developments, include Steelpoort Wastewater Treatment Works (R70 million), Steelpoort Water Treatment Project (R65 million), Ga-Malekana Water Treatment Facility upgrade (R121 million), R37 and R555 road construction (R2 billion), Steelpoort railway siding development, SEZ human settlement scoping report and Steel Bridge upgrade (R70 million)

The integration of energy, water, road, and rail infrastructure solidifies FTSEZ's standing as a competitive industrial hub.

As part of South Africa's Special Economic Zone programme, FTSEZ aligns with the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) to enhance manufacturing, attract foreign direct investment, and drive economic resilience. By prioritising green energy and mineral beneficiation, FTSEZ aims to Strengthen local manufacturing capacity, create 8,000 jobs in the short term and 20,000 in the next decade, foster innovation and skills development, support South Africa's hydrogen economy transition.

FTSEZ is poised to become both a consumer and producer of hydrogen, reinforcing Limpopo's ambition to establish a thriving hydrogen economy. The zone will play a critical role in driving demand for mining inputs, enabling large-scale industrialisation and accelerating South Africa's green economy transition.



Ga-Malekane to Ga-Maphopha road pain relief

In a province where infrastructure development often moves at a glacial pace, the progress on Ga-Malekane's long-awaited road refurbishment and bridge construction is a welcome pain relief. Limpopo's MEC for Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure, Ernest Rachoene, recently inspected the site of the new Steel Bridge in the Steelpoort area, lauding the Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) for its efficiency. With the project now 80% complete, it stands as a rare example of state-led development keeping to schedule.

Originally launched in 2022, the project is slated for completion by November 2024. "When we conduct site visits, we often find work delayed or substandard," Rachoene remarked. "However, in this case, the contractor has done an excellent job."

With palpable anticipation the residents of Ga-Malekane view the road project as more than just improved transport - it is a long-overdue lifeline and a pain relief. Kgoši Nkwane Malekane of the Ga-Malekane Tribal Authority has welcomed interim interventions, particularly maintenance work on the dilapidated D2219 road linking the village to Jane Furse. Until the budget allows for a full tarring of the route, blading work will be undertaken in the coming weeks under the Dikgerekgere programme.

The D2219 has long been a source of frustration for locals. "It has been a nightmare to drive on this road," said Kgoši Malekane, citing worsening potholes exacerbated by heavy rains. While acknowledging the province's financial constraints, he remains hopeful that the government will deliver on its commitments.

Beyond the roads, the Steel Bridge project - currently at 45% completion - has drawn praise for its collaborative approach. Eight mining companies, including Dwarsrivier Chrome Mine,

Glencore, and Samancor Chrome Mine, have collectively invested R127 million into the effort. Construction officially began in June 2023 following a sod-turning ceremony in February of that year.

"The bridge plays a crucial role in providing access for the community—not just for daily commuting but also for essential social functions like funerals and weddings," said Conroy van der Westhuizen, speaking on behalf of the mining consortium. "This project will facilitate economic development and ensure children can travel to school safely."

The existing single-lane steel bridge, a century-old landmark, has been assessed to remain structurally sound for at least another nine years. The new bridge, however, will be essential in handling the growing transport needs of the region.

Chairperson of the Board of Directors for Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) Mr. Moses Tseli underscored the necessity of private sector involvement in infrastructure projects. "Service delivery is not solely the responsibility of the government. The partnership with the mines is crucial in uplifting Sekhukhune's economy."

With accelerated construction efforts overcoming the logistical challenges posed by the Steelpoort River's waters, the project's completion is now within reach. For a region long neglected in South Africa's infrastructure plans, this initiative signals the power of sustained investment and cooperation in transforming communities.

As the final phase of construction approaches, the residents of Ga-Malekane can look forward to safer, more accessible roads - proving that when government and private entities align, real progress is possible.

Sekhukhune unleashes rural household sanitation for dignity.



In a bold step to uplift lives in rural communities and restore human dignity through improved sanitation, the Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr Minah Bahula, led a community inspection on 25 June 2025 of an ambitious sanitation project underway in Ward 7 of Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality. Branded under the powerful slogan “Sanitation is Dignity,” the initiative signals a renewed commitment by the municipality to deliver basic services where they matter most, at household level and community spaces that define everyday life.

The project, launched in April 2025, is focused on the construction of Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilets, a dry sanitation solution tailored to Sekhukhune’s environmental and infrastructural realities. Already, 143 pit linings have been completed out of the targeted 350 units across the villages of Thoto, Dikathone, and Setebong, with full completion anticipated by the end of July 2025.

*Restoring dignity.
Promoting hygiene.
Creating jobs.
Sekhukhune District
Municipality’s sanitation
revolution is turning
toilets into tools of
transformation.*

A Community-Centered Solution

Executive Mayor Bahula, known for her grassroots leadership style, was visibly pleased with the progress and community involvement in the rollout. “This is more than bricks and mortar,” she said. “This is about restoring dignity to our people. It’s about health, safety, and respect for the human condition, especially in areas where sanitation has long been overlooked.”

The scope of the project doesn’t stop at households. In a culturally attuned move, the municipality is extending the provision of VIP toilets to rural cemeteries, where burials often attract large gatherings with no adequate sanitation. “We must dignify even the final journey of life,” Bahula stated. “Mourners, especially the elderly and women, must not suffer the indignity of open defecation during funerals.”

The Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) toilet is a dry, low-cost, and eco-friendly sanitation system designed to address the

shortcomings of traditional pit latrines. Each unit consists of a deep pit to collect waste, a superstructure to ensure privacy, a ventilation pipe that releases gases and reduces odour, a fly screen to block insects and stop disease transmission, and a dark interior to prevent flies from entering

This innovative yet simple technology requires no water and is well-suited for semi-arid, rural areas like Sekhukhune, where piped sewerage infrastructure is often unavailable.

Cllr Bahula underscored the importance of the project in the fight against communicable diseases. "By reducing open defecation, we minimize the risks of cholera, typhoid, and diarrheal infections," she said. These are real threats in communities lacking proper sanitation.

The toilets also have a gendered safety dimension. "Private, secure toilets improve the safety of women and children," Bahula noted, particularly for those who face threats when relieving themselves in the bush or at night.

Equally, the link between sanitation and education, especially for adolescent girls, is well-documented. "Girls often miss school due to lack of adequate toilets," said Bahula. "This project changes that."

Beyond improving health and hygiene, the sanitation rollout is a job creator and skills incubator. The district has ensured that local labour is prioritized, offering work to builders, artisans, and unemployed youth. The project is also empowering local contractors and cooperatives, providing them with valuable project management and maintenance opportunities.

"People don't just get toilets," the Executive Mayor said. "They get skills, jobs, and a chance to contribute to something meaningful. This is a living example of service delivery meeting economic development."

Training modules embedded within the project offer transferable construction and sanitation-related skills that will serve workers beyond the life of the initiative.

Localised, Scalable, Sustainable

Sekhukhune's landscape is characterized by dispersed rural settlements, variable soils, and water scarcity, making waterborne sewer systems largely impractical. The VIP model, by contrast, is flexible, affordable, and easy to maintain. The use of locally sourced materials adds a layer of economic benefit to the community, while community-based service providers ensure ongoing maintenance and replicability.

Cllr Bahula emphasized the importance of community ownership. "This is a model we can scale across the district and beyond," she said. "It respects our values, protects our environment, and delivers with dignity."

The inclusion of cemetery toilets adds a unique, culturally respectful layer to the intervention. Funerals often bring together hundreds of people from various regions. A lack of sanitation in these settings not only causes physical discomfort but also poses serious health risks.

Installing VIP toilets at graveyards ensures that mourners have privacy and hygiene, the dignity of the deceased is upheld, the



community's cultural practices are respected, disease spread through open defecation is minimized.

"This is about honouring the living and the dead," Bahula concluded.

This project is a flagship sanitation initiative under Sekhukhune District Municipality's mandate as a Water Services Authority (WSA). It aligns with national priorities on universal access to water and sanitation and is a practical implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: *Ensure access to water and sanitation for all*.

More importantly, the VIP toilet rollout reflects a rights-based approach to development, treating sanitation not as a privilege, but as a basic human right.

"Sanitation is not a luxury," the Executive Mayor said. "It is dignity, it is health, and it is respect. Through this rollout, we are closing the gap between rights and reality, one toilet at a time."

The rollout of rural household sanitation is being implemented across all four local municipalities within Sekhukhune District, namely, Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality: 350 VIP toilets (on going progress); Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality: 350 VIP toilets (contractor appointed in March 2025; implementation underway); Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality: 250 VIP toilets (contractor appointed in March 2025); and Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality: 400 VIP toilets (contractor appointed also in March 2025).

An inception meeting with Implementing Water Services (IWS) launched the project, and compliance reporting mechanisms were instituted to ensure quality assurance.

Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) are being appointed through engagements between contractors and ward councillors, further anchoring the project within local governance structures. Cession agreements have been submitted to support the bulk procurement of VIP toilet structures from certified manufacturers, ensuring timely delivery and uniform quality.

Sekhukhune's rural sanitation initiative is more than a service delivery success. It is a transformational blueprint for how municipalities can deliver dignity, health, opportunity, and cultural integrity, even in the most remote areas. This includes using simple, effective, and culturally relevant technology, while integrating economic development and rights-based thinking, Sekhukhune is setting a new standard for rural development in South Africa.

"With every toilet constructed, the District is not just solving a sanitation challenge; it is affirming the worth of every citizen, reclaiming the health of its environment, and building a future rooted in dignity for all" concluded Executive Mayor Bahula



Industrial Bulk Water Fuels Sekhukhune Economy

Sekhukhune District Municipality as the water services authority is give far less credit for facilitating economic growth through strategic agreements bulk industrial water supply, and in securing the future of water security in Sekhukhune. In a landmark initiative aimed at enhancing water security and economic development, Sekhukhune District Municipality has partnered with the Lebalelo Water Users Association (LWUA) to expand industrial water abstraction. This collaboration seeks to strengthen bulk water supply infrastructure, supporting both the mining sector and local communities across the district.

Lebalelo Water Users Association, established in 2002, is a unique collaboration between the South African Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and major mining corporations operating in the Eastern Limb of the Bushveld Igneous Complex. The association was formed to provide reliable bulk raw water supply to both industry and communities in water-stressed regions of Limpopo Province.

The strategic partnership between Sekhukhune District Municipality and Lebalelo aims to bolster economic activity by ensuring consistent water availability. Through a series of ambitious pipeline projects and infrastructure developments, the initiative seeks to alleviate regional water shortages and unlock new opportunities for industrial and agricultural growth.

Lebalelo is currently spearheading several large-scale projects designed to enhance bulk water distribution in the region. These include Clapham to Polokwane Pipeline Project: A concept study is underway to construct a pipeline linking the Clapham Pump Station to the Olifantspoort Weir. This pipeline will transport water from the newly built De Hoop Dam, addressing water scarcity in Polokwane while alleviating pressure on Flag Boshielo Dam. ORWRDP Phase 2B & 2B+

Expansion: This extension will connect Flag Boshielo Dam to the Northern Limb of Limpopo, supplying water to mines and communities in Mogalakwena Municipality. Southern Extension 2: With increased mining activities in the Southern Eastern Limb, feasibility studies are in progress for an additional pipeline alongside the existing Southern Extension to boost capacity.

Sekhukhune District Municipality's partnership with LWUA is expected to deliver far-reaching economic benefits. Improved water supply infrastructure will not only sustain mining operations - a key economic driver in the district, but also facilitate socio-economic development in over 105 local communities intersected by the pipelines.

Beyond industrial supply, the initiative incorporates sustainable development programs aimed at improving water accessibility for residents. The Mooihoek Water Treatment Works, managed by Lepelle Northern Water Board, plays a crucial role in treating and distributing potable water to communities, ensuring equitable access to clean water.

As climate change intensifies water scarcity challenges, proactive infrastructure investment remains a priority. The partnership between Sekhukhune District Municipality and Lebalelo underscores a commitment to long-term water security, enabling sustained economic growth and improved quality of life for communities.

With large-scale infrastructure projects and strategic partnerships, Sekhukhune is positioning itself as a model for public-private cooperation in water resource management. As the district continues to develop, ensuring reliable water access will be instrumental in fueling economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

Breakthrough in the Groblersdal-Luckau Bulk Water Supply Project

The Groblersdal-Luckau Bulk Water Supply Project marks a major step forward in addressing water scarcity in the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality. This initiative, under the funding and oversight of Sekhukhune District Municipality, aims to enhance water accessibility by constructing a regional pipeline linking Loskop Dam to Groblersdal and the Luckau area. Despite challenges such as project delays and environmental approvals, significant progress has been made, with an overall completion rate of 19%. This article provides an overview of the project's scope, implementation challenges, and expected impact on local communities.

Water scarcity remains a pressing issue in the Sekhukhune District Municipality (SDM) and neighbouring municipalities. The Groblersdal-Luckau Bulk Water Supply Project is a critical infrastructure development initiative designed to alleviate water shortages in multiple villages. The project is part of the broader Loskop Bulk Water Supply Project, which extends its benefits beyond SDM to include Nkangala District Municipality in Mpumalanga Province.

The Groblersdal-Luckau Bulk Water Supply Project is divided into five work packages. Key elements include Laying a 30-kilometer bulk water pipeline from Loskop Dam; Construction of a 3MI/d Water Treatment Works (WTW); Installation of a 6MI command reservoir; Infrastructure development to connect villages, including Moutse, Ntwane, Thabahubedu, and surrounding areas; Coordination with the SDM to ensure village-level water supply connections; The project is under active construction, with an overall progress rate of 19% as of the latest reports.

Despite steady progress, the project has encountered several challenges that have contributed to delays which include slow selection and appointment of local Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) took six months to complete, causing setbacks. However, this issue has been resolved, with 29 local companies (17 from Elias Motsoaledi LM and 12 from Thembisile Hani and Steve Tshwete LM) appointed and operational since November 2023. There were also changes in the pipeline route, particularly at canal crossings, necessitated design adjustments and additional Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). The EIA report is expected to be submitted to the Department of Environmental Affairs by February 9, 2024, with approvals anticipated by April 2024. The design phase for the Loskop Dam wall connection is at an advanced stage. Although the original completion date was set for July 2024, the contractor is expected to submit a revised schedule for approval due to encountered delays.

Ministerial Intervention and Complementary Water Supply Efforts

To complement the bulk water project, the Moutse Ministerial

Intervention Project was successfully completed on June 31, 2023. This initiative focused on short-term water supply solutions, including deployment of 20 water trucks (18,000L capacity each).

installation of 1,800 polyethylene water storage tanks (5kL each); conducting geohydrological studies; construction of four water gantries (Marble Hall, Uitspaning, Kgapamadi, and Groblersdal); establishment of four package plants (Mamaneng, Matlala Lehwelere, Kgobokwane, and Stompo); installation of seven elevated steel water tanks (90kL–412kL capacity); equipping 22 boreholes and connecting them to bulk pipelines, and securing Eskom connections for borehole operations.

SDM currently provides 60 kiloliters of free basic water per household, with usage beyond this threshold being chargeable. However, significant water supply challenges persist with 36.7% of households (29,004) lack access to a reliable water supply, impeding progress toward SDG 2030 Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Some boreholes have dried up due to prolonged drought conditions, Frequent leaks, inefficient operation, and vandalism contribute to water losses. Illegal Connections and Theft persists with unauthorized water extractions from bulk pipelines further strain supply efforts. There is palpable project Delays and Budget Constraints: Delays in project execution and inadequate funding hinder water infrastructure improvements.

Sekhukhune District Municipality, in collaboration with Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, continues to provide sanitation services. Despite these efforts, significant gaps remain only 33.8% of households have access to waterborne sanitation services, the majority of residents rely on sanitation solutions below RDP standards, with VIP latrines being the primary provision in rural areas, the sanitation backlog stands at 66.2% (52,372 households), exacerbated by financial constraints, limited hygiene awareness, and inadequate waste management infrastructure.

The Groblersdal-Luckau Bulk Water Supply Project represents a transformative intervention in addressing water scarcity in Elias Motsoaledi LM and surrounding areas. While challenges persist, particularly in project execution and sanitation service delivery, ongoing efforts by municipal and ministerial stakeholders are critical in ensuring long-term water security. With continued investment, efficient implementation, and community engagement, the project can achieve its intended impact, bringing sustainable water access to thousands of households in the region.

Investment in Sekhukhune District's Healthcare



The new Private Hospital in Burgersfort



A year after its much-anticipated opening in August 2024, the RH Burgersfort Private Hospital stands tall as a beacon of hope, progress, and transformation in the Sekhukhune District. Strategically located along the bustling R555 corridor near the Thaba Moshate Casino Hotel, this state-of-the-art facility is revolutionizing healthcare access for residents of Fetakgomo Tubatse and the surrounding cross-border region between Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

For a district historically underserved in terms of health infrastructure, this R162 million investment could not have come at a better time. Sekhukhune has long battled complex healthcare challenges: teenage pregnancy remains prevalent with 13% of girls aged 15 - 19 having given birth; maternal mortality is a continued concern with 67 deaths per 100,000 live births; severe acute malnutrition (SAM) tragically claimed 27 children in 2018; and immunisation coverage for children remains below national targets. Adding to this burden are chronic and lifestyle diseases, now among the leading causes of adult mortality in Limpopo.

Yet amid these sobering realities, the RH Burgersfort Private Hospital offers new life, literally and figuratively.

Equipped with 100 beds, three theatres, and an expanding suite of services, the hospital is designed to meet both urgent and long-term healthcare needs. Whether it's eye care, dermatology, cancer screening, chronic disease management, or HIV/TB treatment, the hospital serves as a critical access point for communities that previously had to travel long distances for specialized care.

Developed through a public-private partnership involving RH Managers, Riobex Pty Ltd, and RH 12J, with financial backing from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the hospital exemplifies the powerful synergy between government policy and private capital.

"RH 12J gives South Africans the opportunity to invest in

healthcare where it's needed most," says Dion Mhlaba, CFO of RH Managers. "This project is proof that socially responsible investing can support national development goals while offering value to communities and investors alike."

The hospital has already made a significant socio-economic impact. During construction, it generated 200 jobs, many filled by local contractors and artisans. Now in full operation, it supports 150 permanent staff, with 65% of employees drawn from the local labour pool.

At the official sod-turning ceremony held in February 2024, Mayor Eddie Maila of Fetakgomo Tubatse captured the spirit of the moment: "This hospital brings hope, jobs, and healthcare under one roof. It is a game-changer for our people and for our economy."

The establishment of the RH Burgersfort Private Hospital marks a turning point for a town traditionally known for mining. As Burgersfort evolves into a vibrant urban and economic hub, quality healthcare infrastructure becomes essential not only for residents but also for investors, corporate employees, and public-private enterprises.

Private hospitals like RH Burgersfort are increasingly viewed as economic enablers, supporting a wide array of secondary industries, from ambulance services, pharmacies, and diagnostic laboratories, to home care services and insurance uptake. More importantly, they ease the strain on overburdened public hospitals, allowing government facilities to focus resources on the indigent population.

Burgersfort's location near provincial borders makes the RH Private Hospital a regional centre for medical tourism. Patients from remote villages in Limpopo and Mpumalanga now have easier access to specialized services closer to home.

Furthermore, in a mining-intensive economy, the hospital provides critical occupational health services, emergency

trauma care, and rehabilitation programmes tailored for workers in high-risk industries. This alignment with the region's economic profile ensures greater health resilience, improved productivity, and better compliance with industry health standards.

During public health crises, the hospital's infrastructure adds much-needed surge capacity. Whether during the height of COVID-19, respiratory illness outbreaks, or maternal emergencies, facilities like RH Burgersfort are integral to a responsive and resilient health system.

In emerging towns like Burgersfort, the value of private hospitals extends beyond patient numbers. They transform the town's image, positioning it as a place where people can not only work, but live, raise families, and thrive.

They signal to investors, healthcare professionals, and skilled workers that Burgersfort is ready for sustainable urban development, that the town is open for business, open for care, and open for a better future.

In the words of a local resident,

"We used to travel to Polokwane or even Gauteng for proper care. Now, we have it at our doorstep. This hospital isn't just a building, it's a blessing."

As RH Burgersfort Private Hospital continues to operate and expand, its legacy is already clear: a healthier population, a growing economy, and a district on the rise. For the people of Sekhukhune, this is more than a health investment. It's an investment in dignity, in development, and in tomorrow.



Marble Hall Dazzles on SANRAL Facelift



Marble Hall, once known primarily for its farming pedigree, is now emerging as a strategic node in South Africa's regional development map, thanks to significant road upgrades spearheaded by the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL). Where the N11 intersects with the R573 Moloto Road, a new chapter in infrastructure-driven growth is being written and quiet transformation is taking place.

For decades, the R573 carried a grim reputation as the "road of death," marked by frequent accidents, overuse, and limited infrastructure. Today, that narrative is being rewritten. SANRAL's multi-billion-rand intervention is delivering modernized roads, improved signage, street lighting, pedestrian pathways, and roundabouts to replace high-risk intersections, interventions that have turned this once-dangerous route into a "corridor of opportunity."

In Marble Hall itself, a newly constructed roundabout facilitates smoother, safer transit for the increasing number of heavy-duty vehicles, particularly trucks linked to agriculture and mining. Enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks and safer crossings, makes daily life more secure for residents, especially schoolchildren and elders.

The upgrades are more than cosmetic; they are catalysts for real economic change. Farmers now transport fresh produce to Pretoria and Johannesburg with fewer delays, reducing spoilage and improving profit margins. Local shop owners report improved delivery times for goods, while mining operations, once hesitant due to logistical bottlenecks, are

eyeing Marble Hall as a more viable base for expansion.

"This is not just a road upgrade, it's an economic enabler," says Cllr Given Moimana, Mayor of Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality. "Our transport turnaround time has improved by at least 30%, and that's a big deal in supply chain management."

The benefits go beyond agriculture and logistics. Over 200 local small businesses have received training and subcontracting opportunities through SANRAL's project rollout. More than 250 residents have earned new skills and driver's licenses, and millions of rands have been spent locally on labour, services, and materials. Families have found new income streams, and small contractors have grown into sustainable enterprises.

Strategically located at the junction of the N11 and the R573, Marble Hall is ideally positioned to leverage regional connectivity. The N11 links the Botswana border to KwaZulu-Natal via Mokopane, Groblersdal, and Middelburg. It's a crucial artery for long-haul freight, agricultural exports, and regional trade.

Meanwhile, the R573 Moloto Road, connecting Pretoria, Siyabuswa, Kwaggafontein, and Marble Hall, is being turned into a multi-provincial development corridor. Already, over R538 million has been invested in the Limpopo section of the upgrade, resulting in direct benefits for local SMMEs, workers, and training institutions.

This dual advantage, sitting on both a major national route (N11) and a newly rehabilitated commuter corridor (R573),

positions Marble Hall as a rising logistics and service centre in Limpopo. As safety improves and travel times drop, investor confidence grows. Plans for new shopping centres, housing developments, and even freight-oriented rail links are already under discussion.

The facelift is also breathing life into Marble Hall's tourism potential. With better roads, tourists from Gauteng and Mpumalanga are increasingly stopping by, whether en route to the Loskop Dam, Schuinsdraai Nature Reserve, or the broader Sekhukhune heritage attractions. Local entrepreneurs are responding with guesthouses, craft stalls, and leisure spots that cater to this emerging visitor economy.

"Marble Hall is no longer just a stopover, it's becoming a destination," says Lerato Motau, a local businesswoman and co-owner of a boutique lodge near the town.

The Marble Hall story is a compelling case study of how infrastructure can transform rural economies. Through intelligent planning, inclusive procurement, and community involvement, the road upgrades have stimulated job creation, improved safety, and opened new economic pathways.

What was once a quiet farming town is now on its way to becoming a vital regional hub, integrated into national transport networks and buzzing with enterprise. If replicated across South Africa, Marble Hall's road-led revival could inspire similar regeneration in rural towns nationwide, where the power of asphalt meets the promise of prosperity.



The rising giant of Ephraim Mogale

A new retail giant has risen in the western limb of Sekhukhune. Leeuwfontein Crossing, the latest R200 million retail venture by McCormick Property Development (MPD), officially opened its doors on 29 May 2025, forever changing the economic landscape of Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality. This latest investment injection makes MPD the one of the biggest retail property investors in Sekhukhune District and true to MPD form, this is more than a mall, it's a retail revolution.

This marks MPD's 88th development, a tribute to four decades of bringing accessible retail to South Africa's most underserved communities. What makes Leeuwfontein Crossing iconic? Start with the signature "Umlhanga Wave" blue roof, a nostalgic nod to the early days of MPD. Add in a modern design by Living Planet Architects, nearly 10,000 square meters of retail space, and a tenant lineup fit for a megacity, and you get a powerhouse destination crafted for rural upliftment.

Shoprite leads the charge as anchor tenant, flanked by a high-energy cast of retail heavyweights, Ackermans, Studio 88, Pep, Standard Bank, and Sportscene (opening soon). Food lovers can indulge in KFC, Debonairs, and Hungry Lion, while services like Shoprite Liquor, Capitec, and medical suites make it a true one-stop lifestyle hub.

But Leeuwfontein Crossing is more than bricks and brands, it's economic transformation in motion. Over 700 jobs were created during construction, and 400 - 500 permanent positions are now up for grabs across retail, maintenance, security, and management. That's livelihoods unlocked, dreams ignited, and skills developed, right in the heart of Sekhukhune.

"It's not just a mall. It's a movement," says Jason McCormick, MD of MPD. "We're not here to build monuments; we're here to build futures."

The vision is shared by traditional leaders and local government. Kgoshi Mokgoma Kotole Rahlagane calls it a "catalyst for economic development," while Mayor Given Moimana is pushing for skills training programs to ensure long-term community empowerment.

For entrepreneurs and investors alike, the success of Leeuwfontein Crossing is a reminder that fortune favors the bold, and the rural. This is a blue-roofed signal that opportunity doesn't just live in cities anymore. It lives where people are ready to rise.



Welcome to the new retail frontier. Welcome to Leeuwfontein Crossing.

The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District who also in 2024 officially opened the Moratiwa Crossing Mall shopping extension in Monsterlus area said “we commend the business community for investing in our people. This mall is a beacon of hope for our people in Ephraim Mogale and the district Municipality.



Sekhukhune Stadiums: A Game-Changer for Sports and Tourism in the District

The winds of transformation are sweeping through Limpopo's sports and tourism landscape, with the upgrading and refurbishment of Tafelkop Sports Stadium poised to be a regional catalyst for sports tourism and economic growth. As the largest settlement in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, Tafelkop, nestled beside the historic town of Motetema, is set to become a premier destination for sports tourism and professional football events.

After months of extensive renovations, the stadium has been inspected and approved for professional events, paving the way for one day be the host venue for Betway Premiership. With a seating capacity of 3,000, the upgraded facility is now equipped to accommodate small-scale league matches, training camps, and community tournaments.

The refurbishment of Tafelkop Stadium is part of a broader municipal strategy to position Elias Motsoaledi and the Sekhukhune District as a sports tourism hub.

This is not just about sports; it's about unlocking economic opportunities for local businesses, hospitality, and tourism. Tafelkop Stadium is a strategic high-impact project that will redefine our district's sporting landscape.

Strategic Sporting Nodes for sports tourism in Sekhukhune District have been identified and there will be interventions beyond football. Sekhukhune District Municipality is also investing in other key sports tourism initiatives such as Groblersdal Sports Node whose plans are underway to develop a provincial golfing event in collaboration with the Limpopo Tourism Agency, leveraging the Groblersdal Golf Club's facilities. Special outreach programs will target women golfers, with dedicated events during Women's Month in August 2025. In the Hlogotlou Stadium Sports Node inroads will be made into Premier Soccer League to assess the stadium's viability for small-scale sporting events. A comprehensive sports tourism strategy will be developed, including funding opportunities and a commercialization model to ensure long-term sustainability.

With these developments, Sekhukhune District is poised to become a leader in sports tourism, drawing fans, athletes, and investment to the region. The first Betway Premiership match at Tafelkop Stadium will mark a historic milestone, not only for football but for the broader vision of positioning sports as a driver of economic and social development.

As the countdown to kick-off begins, one thing is certain - Tafelkop Stadium is more than just a venue; it's the heartbeat of a new sporting revolution in South Africa's dynamic rural landscape.

Executive Mayor Cllr Minah Bahula has expressed excitement over the progress of various sports infrastructure projects across the district. This also include the completed Leeufontein, Ga Motodi Sports Complexes in the Fetakgomo-Tubatse, Groblersdal Rugby stadium, as well as sports facilities in Ga Masemola, Ga Marishane and Jane Furse artificial pitch in Makhuduthamaga Municipality, and Mamphokgo Village—(where upgrades are currently underway). The Executive Mayor notes that these developments are set to continue to energize the local sporting community and significantly reshape the future of sport in the Sekhukhuneland.



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