

## **COJ Waiting on Delayed Clean Up**

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Residents, traders, and small business owners have been waiting on the City of Johannesburg (COJ) to finally get basic services and cleanups that are required and have been promised to them by former Mayor Herman Mashaba. The cleanup projects were launched in 2017 and, known as the Aresebetseng and Live Life Always in 2020, and by the newly elected Mayor Mpho Phalatse who claimed that she will be restoring the dignity of the city and its people.

The city is still in devastating condition with waste on almost every corner in the city, puddles of dirty water, and piles of waste and rotting away at the corners and traffic lights as the basic services are not being provided to the city.

This has been a great inconvenience to the people living in the city centre and those who work here. Most informal traders and small businesses selling fruits and fast foods as well as salons operate near these spaces and have to deal with these issues.

In April 2022, Phalatse announced in her maiden State of the City speech that her first priority will be getting the basics right and this would include ensuring that every household in the city receives waste services on a weekly basis. She said this would include areas like informal settlements which will be dependent on the budgets allocated to the city. She also spoke about the irregular use of budgets and that time will be spent on legal issues of budget and the city due to audits in the financial year 2020/21.

Meanwhile, the city is drowning in waste and sewage and it only increases by the day. People have to live and work alongside it but it ruins the air residents breathe.

A 27-year-old (who did not want his name mentioned), from Malawi who has a small shop where he makes sandals at the corner of Pritchard, and Goud said that it affects his business negatively as people avoid going close to see what he makes and sells.

“The people dump the waste in front of the shop at night and I have to shift it away in the morning when I arrive.” He has also made mention how the responsible people for cleanups, who work for the city, do not do their jobs and that one needed to tip them to clean. “The city should check on the work done by their employees and see if they are working to their full capacity because they just touch a little and move. They may have their own reasons; I don’t know but they need to be monitored.” said the shoemaker.

He said that, “it could be the lack of knowledge on how to manage waste and people should be provided with that knowledge.” He also complained that it seems he is the only one concerned with the issue as it is closer to him.

“I can barely breathe a breath of fresh air because of the smell and [it] is difficult to eat around but I have become used to it because this is where I always am,” said the shoe maker

He sometimes has to make means from his own pocket to pay someone who is unemployed or homeless around the area to clean up and move the waste elsewhere. He suggested that a dustbin in that space would be very helpful and also if people of the city

would be organised and create a discipline to prevent the increase of the waste as it piles up around the city.

Other areas in the city are not as badly affected which are privately owned spaces that make use of private cleaning services to keep their spaces clean. It really questions the services produced by the city and their ways of providing these basic services. How the budget is rolled out and how the plans are for ensuring that the environment of the city is clean, safe and healthy.

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