20 November 2026

Dear coalition negotiators, party leaders and independent candidates,

Johannesburg coalition agreement: commitments on development planning and by-law enforcement

JoburgCAN asks your party to include the following four commitments in any coalition agreement reached to govern the City of Johannesburg.

- Audit the City's by-laws, publish the findings and set deadlines for addressing outdated rules and gaps in enforcement.
- Fund inspections, act on residents' complaints and publish enforcement outcomes.
- Investigate suspected unlawful building and land use, follow due process and hold offenders accountable.
- Check water, sewerage and electricity capacity before approving developments. Where upgrades are needed, identify who is responsible and when the work is due.

The Joburg Community Action Network (JoburgCAN) brings together residents' associations, community groups and business forums to hold the City of Johannesburg accountable for the services it provides and how it spends public money. It helps communities raise concerns with the City, challenge poor governance and propose practical solutions to local problems.

The attached findings are drawn directly from the raw petition data. Of the 1,000 submissions JoburgCAN analysed, 926 backed all four commitments. Petitioners also made requests in their own words of which we received more than 200. Real people are asking for leadership that responds when they report a problem.

When homeowners, businesses and developers know the same rules apply to everyone, they can invest in Johannesburg with greater confidence. Residents should also be able to see what the City has done when someone breaks those rules.

Please email info@joburgcan.org.za to confirm which commitments your party will put forward. For each commitment adopted, we ask that the agreement name the responsible office, set a deadline and provide for public progress reports. We will report back to petitioners on your response.

If you would like to review the full petition dataset, please request it by emailing info@joburgcan.org.za.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Fish
Managing Director, JoburgCAN

Enclosure: JoburgCAN petition findings, 20 November 2026

The petition was open between 11-18 November 2026.

JOBURG CAN
COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

PETITION FINDINGS

20 November 2026

Joburg has rules – make them work

JoburgCAN circulated this petition to give residents a say in how the next City of Johannesburg administration handles development and enforces its by-laws. Residents were asked what the City should do when building rules are breached and how it should check that basic services can support new developments.

JoburgCAN sent the petition to the parties negotiating Johannesburg's coalition agreement and asked them to include the four commitments below. This briefing shows how many submissions backed each one and what else petitioners asked for.
The petition was circulated and opened for public comment between 11 and 18 November 2026.

92.6%

926 of 1,000 submissions
supported all four commitments.

Support for each commitment

Check service capacity before approving developments — 95.9%

Assess water, sewerage and electricity capacity. Set out any upgrades and deadlines.

959 of 1,000

Enforce existing by-laws — 95.8%

Fund inspections, act on complaints and publish enforcement outcomes.

958 of 1,000

Act against unlawful building and land use — 95.8%

Investigate suspected violations, follow due process and hold offenders accountable.

958 of 1,000

Audit the by-laws and publish the findings — 95.2%

Identify outdated rules and enforcement gaps. Publish an action plan with deadlines.

952 of 1,000

Percentages use all 1,000 submissions in the export. Respondents could select several commitments. The figures describe those who chose to take part in the petition.

What else did petitioners ask for?

The optional comment field contained 208 written entries. The examples below summarise individual requests. Only the four commitments on page one were put to every petitioner.

Give residents a way to track complaints

Provide a dedicated by-law reporting number, issue a reference for each complaint and publish ward-level figures so residents can see what action followed.

Act on late-night noise and incompatible land use

Check zoning and noise compliance at clubs and bars operating in residential areas. Respond to repeat complaints about amplified music and after-hours construction.

Protect parks and public facilities

Provide bins, tackle illegal dumping and maintain parks, pools and play areas. One petitioner proposed a dedicated team to maintain Delta Park and remove invasive plants.

Budget for upkeep as neighbourhoods grow

Assess the combined impact of developments in adjoining areas. Respondents also asked for maintenance budgets, repairs to leaking pipes and the reinstatement of roads after excavations.

Give communities a role in planning

Include residents in the by-law audit, make current rules easy to find and train residents' associations to report infringements. One proposal would let communities help care for electricity substations.

Equip officials to enforce the rules

Train metro police officers to document infringements correctly. Other proposals included bringing back building inspectors and reopening the municipal court to hear by-law cases.

Planning for growth in Joburg

Written submissions raised questions about what residents can see before a planning decision and what the City should take into account when it makes one.

Make planning applications searchable

One petitioner asked for a register searchable by property. Residents could see what a developer proposes and check the deadline for submitting a comment.

Consider developments together

A submission from the Rivonia and greater Sandton area asked the City to consider projects already approved or under construction. It called for checks on roads, stormwater and pedestrian safety, alongside water, sewerage and electricity.

Identify who must deliver upgrades

Where approval depends on an infrastructure upgrade, a petitioner wanted residents to be able to see who must carry out the work and when it is due.

Plan for heritage, heat and waste

Separate suggestions included protecting buildings from different architectural periods, assessing heat risks with communities, and reviewing how waste will be collected in both new and existing residential areas.

FROM A WRITTEN SUBMISSION

“Heritage should also receive appropriate attention to ensure we do not lose examples from the different eras in our architectural history.”

How residents want to track results

Petitioners described the information they need after a complaint, a disputed bill or a repair. Others suggested how the City could explain its rules and account for its decisions.

Show what happens to complaints

One proposal called for a public ward dashboard showing the number and type of complaints, their status and any fines issued. Another asked for service standards against which departments could be held accountable.

Report leaks through to repair

One petitioner wanted ward figures on the number and volume of leaks, including faults recorded as resolved in error. The same submission asked for information on delays in obtaining parts.

Resolve disputed utility bills

Written entries described estimated readings and charges continuing after a broken meter had been reported. Petitioners asked the City to investigate incorrect invoices and ensure water and electricity readings are accurate.

Explain by-laws and publish who makes decisions

One suggestion was to include by-law information with monthly municipal bills. Another petitioner asked the City to identify the officials and executives involved in building and land-use decisions.

FROM A WRITTEN SUBMISSION

“In 2026 we should be able to see on a Ward level the number of complaints received, type, status, and fines issued.”