

City of Joburg launches new programme to promote safety, security

The Department of Economic Development: Tourism Directorate, in support of tourism growth in Johannesburg, has launched its Tourism Ambassador Programme, with the aim to make Johannesburg a safer destination and to increase the number of leisure and business tourists to the city.



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"In terms of Johannesburg's Growth and Development Strategy [GDS], the Joburg 2040 – tourism remains an economic growth imperative on the city's agenda. In line with the prioritisation of achieving increased visitor arrivals in the city and contributing towards the economic growth target of 5% by 2021, Joburg Tourism has sought ways to facilitate the tourism experience at sites and attractions in the city," says Councillor Leah Knott, MMC for the City's Department of Economic Development.

The programme will enhance tourism safety in identified tourism nodes and create 60 direct job opportunities. This will improve on opportunities created in line with the Expanded Public Works Programme [EPWP]. Gauteng Tourism Authority is implementing a similar programme on behalf of the National Department of Tourism; however, due to the limited number of monitors allocated, safety concerns are not being adequately addressed.

Councillor Michael Sun, MMC for Public Safety, comments on the collaboration to create visibility at tourism sites and attractions: "This is a proactive initiative which is set to reduce the number of security incidents affecting tourists and residents. Secondly, the ambassadors will assist in providing tourism information to tourists and visitors."

With elements of linking ambassadors with visible policing and safety to deliver pleasant tourism experiences, the programme is also geared to create Johannesburg tourism ambassadors who are knowledgeable about attractions and their key selling points.

"We are thrilled that this Mayoral Service delivery initiative is also addressing the issue of reducing unemployment, as 60 unemployed Johannesburg youth with a minimum of matric qualifications have been selected to participate," says Knott.

"Selected from applicants in the Department of Public Safety's unemployed youth database, the team of youngsters will be trained and thereafter deployed for a period of three years, receiving a stipend in line with the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) during this time."

Prior to their deployment, the team of 60 ambassadors will be trained in the following key aspects related to their role:

- Tourism information, geo-locating tourism sites and tourist site guidance
- Service excellence and customer care
- Communication skills and conflict management
- By-law education and awareness on issues such as public roads, street trading, etc.
- Road safety
- Community patrolling

Safety and security in the City

As a local government, the City via the Department of Public Safety is assisting the SA Police Services (SAPS) in its efforts to reduce crime and improve safety in Joburg. The Department of Public Safety is comprised of four sub-elements to ensure safety and security in the City: Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD), Emergency Management Services (EMS), the Disaster Management Directorate and the Licensing Directorate.

The City's effort to ensure safety and security is based on the integrated multi-agency Joburg City Safety Strategy (JCSS), revised in 2017, which embraces crime prevention through environmental design, as well as urban management and monitoring service delivery.

The City is also focusing its efforts on improving its planning and response with regard to emergency incidents and ensuring that there is a robust and constant focus on updating its disaster risk management plan.

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