



28 March 2022

A SYNOPSIS OF NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA (NMM) ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The North West Provincial Government, through the Department of Public Works and Roads, is managing a road network of 19 783 km. Only 5 083 km is surfaced (tarred), leaving a serious backlog of 14 700 km of gravel road network.¹ This network carries immense value not only to the North West Province, but also creates direct economic links and benefits with its provincial corridors to the neighbouring provinces such as Gauteng, Northern Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

The North West road network links South Africa with other international countries such as Botswana and Namibia. The province's roads network is a catalyst for development and economic growth. The province is one of the biggest suppliers of meat, maize and other fresh agricultural produce in the country, with the biggest abattoir in Africa situated in Christiana in the South of the provincial capital, Mahikeng.² With only 26% of the roads paved (tarred), as opposed to 74% of unpaved (gravel), the paved section is distressed as all vehicles in the province are squeezed into this section.³

This brief gives an overview of the road infrastructure in the Ngaka Modiri Molema (NMM) District Municipality in the North West Province. It commences by giving a profile of the NMM District Municipality. It then offers a cursory look at some of the road infrastructure projects that are undertaken by the municipality. In addition, the brief provides a brief overview of the bridge that was destroyed by floods at the beginning of 2022/23.

2. NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA (NMM) DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

2.1 Profile of the NMM District Municipality

2.1.1 Geography

The NMM District Municipality is a category C municipality which is located in the North West Province. The main offices of the district municipality are situated in Mahikeng, the capital city of the North West Province.

The district municipality is bordered by Ruth Mompati District Municipality in the west, Bojanala Platinum District municipality in the east, and Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality in the south. On the north, the NMM District Municipality shares an international border with the Republic of Botswana. It covers an area of approximately 28 114 km².

¹ North West Department of Public Works and Roads (2019).

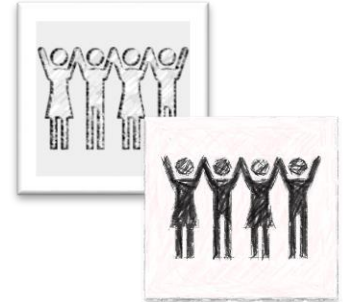
² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



2.1.2 Demography

With 961 960 people, the NMM District Municipality housed approximately 1.6% of South Africa's total population or 23.3% of the provincial population in 2019.⁴ Between 2008 and 2018, the population growth averaged 1.3% per annum, which was just below the growth rate of the province and South Africa at approximately 2% and 1.6%, respectively.⁵



The Ditsobotla Local Municipality increased the most, in terms of population, with an average annual growth rate of 1.7%. The Mafikeng Local Municipality had the second highest growth in terms of its population, with an average annual growth rate of 1.5%. The Ratlou Local Municipality had the lowest average annual growth rate of 0.6% relative to others within the NMM District Municipality.

2.1.3 Governance

As a category C municipality, the district has the following local municipalities under its area of jurisdiction:⁶

- Ditsobotla;
- Mahikeng;
- Ramotshere Moilwa;
- Ratlou; and
- Tswain.

2.1.4 Economic Profile

In 2018, the community services sector was the largest within the NMM District Municipality, accounting for R18.2 billion (or 36.5%) of the total gross value added (GVA) in the district municipality's economy.⁷ The sector that contributes the second most to the GVA is the finance sector at 15.9%, followed by the trade sector with 13.3%. The construction sector contributes R 1.5 billion (or 3.1%) of the total GVA.

2.1.5 Social Service Delivery

The district can generally be described as a water scarce area, with most communities obtaining water supply from groundwater resources. The main source of surface water is Setumo Dam which supplies approximately 40% of the water needs of Mahikeng and its immediate surrounding areas. The balance of the water is from groundwater, with the primary source being the Grootpan/Lichtenburg/Grootfontein/Zeerust (GLGZ) dolomitic formation,

⁴ Department of Cooperative Governance and Cooperation (2020).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality (2013).

⁷ Department of Cooperative Governance and Cooperation (2020).



which presently supplies the balance of water to Mahikeng, as well as portions of Ditsobotla and Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipalities.



The NMM District Municipality had 25.3% households with piped water inside the dwelling, and 27.31% households had piped water inside the yard. About 1.5% households had no formal piped water. Over time, from 2008, the number of households below the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)-level were 55 600 within the NMM District Municipality, and this decreased annually at approximately -2% per annum to 45 700 in 2018.⁸



The large formal towns, as well as a number of institutions such as border posts, hospitals and prisons in the NMM District Municipality are served by a total of 15 wastewater treatment works of one form or another, in various states of repair. However, rural communities do not have any access to formal sanitation, and generally make use of unimproved pit latrines.



About 41.5% households had their refuse removed weekly, 1.5% households had their refuse removed less often than weekly, and 51.3% households had to remove their refuse personally (own dump).⁹ Overtime, from 2008, the households with no formal refuse removal in the NMM District Municipality was 144 000. This increased to 148 221 in 2012 and declined to 139 330 in 2016, followed by an increase to 145 483 in 2018.¹⁰



The NMM District Municipality has a 3 688 km of gravel road, and 1 548 of surfaced roads.



Households are distributed into 3 electricity usage categories, namely:¹¹

- Households using electricity for cooking.
- Households using electricity for heating.
- Households using electricity for lighting.

5.9% of households have access to electricity for lighting only, 82.9% households had electricity for lighting and other purposes, and 11.2% households did not have access to any electricity.¹²

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.



The region within the NMM District Municipality with the highest number of households with electricity for lighting and other purposes is Mahikeng Local Municipality, with 39.2% of the households with electricity for lighting and other purposes. The region with the lowest proportion of households with electricity for lighting and other purposes is Ratlou Local Municipality, with 10.7% of the total households with electricity for lighting and other purposes. Over time, from 2008, the households without an electrical connection in the NMM District Municipality was 44 900. This decreased annually at - 4.4% per annum to 28 600 in 2018.¹³

2.2 A Cursory Look at the NMM Road Projects

In January 2022, the North West Department of Public Works and Roads (“the Department”) launched, for immediate implementation, road projects with the combined contract value of more than R430 million for the NMM District Municipality in the 2022/23 financial year.¹⁴ These road projects form part of the 14, which the Department undertook to implement in municipalities in the four districts before the end of the current financial year. They form part the Provincial 10-Year Road Master Plan.¹⁵



Three of the road projects are upgrades from gravel to tar and special maintenance. The Department appointed the contractor, Afri Road Surfacing (Pty) Ltd, for the special maintenance on the 28 km stretch road from Setlagole to Delareyville (Road P34/4).¹⁶ The contract amount for the 15-month project is R150.4 million which will go towards the rehabilitation and resurfacing of the existing and deformed surfaced road. This is a road that connects Delareyville town with Madibogo Setlagole village and Geysdorp.

In addition, it was reported that work was expected to start – in the next 18 months since January 2022 – for the upgrade from gravel to tar of the 15 km road from the intersection of Chief Albert Luthuli road, through Lokaleng and Mogosane villages ending up in Tlapeng. (Road Z422).¹⁷ Lichenry Construction (Pty) Ltd was appointed to implement the project for a contract amount of R103.9 million.

The appointment of a new contractor by the Department followed the termination of the previous contractor, WTW Civil (Pty), that had been appointed in January 2020. The termination of the WTW Civil (Pty) Ltd contract had been attributed to poor performance.¹⁸ Originally, the project which involved the upgrade of the 8 km stretch of the road then, was to have been completed by November 2021.¹⁹

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ North West Department of Public Works and Roads (2022a).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.



Moreover, it was reported that plans were afoot to have construction work on the road from Madibogo going through Madibogopan, and ending at the intersection between Stella and Delareyville (Road Z482 to D1727).²⁰ This road is strategic to the district in that it remains an important link between Madibogo, Madibogopan and the local urban centres of Mahikeng and Vryburg. It is also an important commuter route for taxis and busses traveling locally and to Mahikeng and Vryburg. Taupele Construction (Pty) Ltd has been appointed to do upgrades from gravel to tar on the 13 km road, for the contract amount of R73.9 million.²¹

Finally, prior to 25 December 2021, M Civils/Dimokotso JV was appointed to do the 13 km Phase 2 upgrade from gravel to tar of the D417 road from Lobatleng to Motswedi outside Lehurutshe.²²

2.2.1 Road D408

The road starts from Itsotseng, at the intersection of roads D40 and D2166, and traverses past Verdwaal, Springbokpan, Galukspan, Uityk and ends at Goedgevonden at the intersection with R375 (P183/1). It involves the rehabilitation of approximately 48 km of the existing single carriageway section of road D408 by implementing a reseal, as well as the rehabilitation of parts of the road network to improve safety. In addition, it is anticipated that it will preserve the investment in the road infrastructure through preventive maintenance.²³ The upgraded road will follow the existing alignment with some geometric improvements.



Work on this project commenced on 8 November 2016. The initial amount of the project was R60.7 million, but this has been revised up to 67.4 million. As at 17 March 2022, it was reported that R67.3 million had been spent.²⁴

2.2.2 Road P152/1 (R507)

Road P152/1 (R507) is a regional distributor linking Delareyville and Setlagole, in the NMM District Municipality. The road starts at the intersection of N18 in Setlagole, proceeds to Delareyville, and ends at the junction with N14 in Delareyville.²⁵ The maintenance of this road commenced on 4 November 2019, and completed over 18 months. By the end of the project, R85.4 million had been spent.²⁶

The work executed under the contract was the rehabilitation and surfacing of approximately 20 km of the road starting from approximately 4 km from the intersection of Road P152/1

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ North West Department of Public Works and Roads (2022b).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ North West Department of Public Works and Roads (2020a).

²⁶ Molapisi (2020).



(R507) and National Road N18 in Setlagole. The work included the construction of 2 km paved access road to Setlhwatlhwe Village in Setlagole, Ratlou Municipality.²⁷

2.2.3 Kraaipan Collapsed Bridge

Kraaipan is a village situated in the NMM District Municipality. It falls under Ratlou Local Municipality. Its population is estimated at 9 933.²⁸ In January 2022, it was reported that residents of Kraaipan had been left stranded due to the fact that two bridges that permit villagers to move in and out of the village had been destroyed by floods. Consequently, residents were struggling to leave the village with a view to doing their daily chores. It became a challenge for learners to go to school, and residents experienced hardship to access medication and, other basic needs and services.²⁹

3. CONCLUSION

Rural roads are often treated as the last link of the transport network.³⁰ Despite this, they often form the most important link in terms of providing access for the rural population. Their permanent or seasonal absence will act as a crucial factor in terms of the access of rural communities to basic services such as education, primary health care, water supply, local markets and economic opportunities.

Investments in rural roads have significant potential for the use of local resources. They create decent jobs, support the local economy and strengthen local commerce and have therefore important implications for poverty reduction and local economic and social development

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²⁷ North West Department of Public Works and Roads (2022b).

²⁸ Statistics South Africa (n.d).

²⁹ Opera News (2022).

³⁰ Donnges et al (2007).



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