**Development of Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone Underway in Partnership with Government and Ford**

* Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ) board established, representing national, provincial and local government, as well as Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (FMCSA)
* Follow-up site visit conducted today by Gauteng Premier, David Makhura; Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Fikile Majola; City of Tshwane Administrator, Mpho Nawa; as well as Director General of DTIC and TASEZ chairperson, Lionel October
* Earthworks and implementation of bulk infrastructure underway, with national government investing R3.4-billion on infrastructure. Twelve Ford supplier and related services companies have committed to establishing operations in the SEZ with an anticipated investment of over R4.3-billion, keen interest from additional suppliers
* Creating empowerment and economic upliftment for surrounding communities is integral to the TASEZ. Community engagement frameworks established involving all key stakeholders, dedicated online portals created for SMMEs and individuals to register for business or employment opportunities

**pretoria,** **South Africa, 8 September 2020** – The innovative new R3.4-billion Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ), which was officially announced in November 2019 by South African president Cyril Ramaphosa and Gauteng Premier David Makhura, is forging ahead with extensive clearing of the site, groundworks and the installation of bulk infrastructure currently underway.

The Tshwane Automotive SEZ was today visited by Premier Makhura; Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Fikile Majola; City of Tshwane Administrator, Mpho Nawa; as well as Director General of DTIC and TASEZ chairperson, Lionel October, reaffirming the importance of this pioneering public-private partnership.

“The Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone represents numerous firsts for South Africa,” Premier Makhura stated during the visit. “It is the first SEZ where all three spheres of government are stakeholders, and it will be the first automotive city in Africa, designed to include township areas that are far from the region’s economic activities.”

The expansive project represents national government through the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition; Gauteng Province through the Gauteng Department of Economic Development; City of Tshwane through the Tshwane Economic Development Agency; along with Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (FMCSA).

Makhura emphasised the need to build an economy that creates more small businesses owned by black people and women, and giving young people opportunities through providing training and entrepreneurial skills so they can set up their own business. “This is the first SEZ that will have 47-percent SMME participation,” he added. “These are real businesses and SMME’s from the local townships that will add real value in the construction of this project, and we need to allow them to graduate into the broader industry, including manufacturing and operations.

“The TASEZ also follows a new model for special economic zones in South Africa, as it is the first SEZ in the country to have numerous investors already lined up, so the facilities are being built to specification for these companies that are already enlisted, and are ready to move in as soon as the construction is completed,” Makhura said. “This province shall never be the same again. I believe that we will go far with this SEZ by working with the DTIC, the Gauteng Province, City of Tshwane and Ford Motor Company.”

The TASEZ Company has been established as the operating company for the SEZ, and is supported by the Coega Development Corporation (CDC) in establishing an automotive manufacturing hub adjacent to Ford’s Silverton Assembly Plant in Pretoria, which aims to become Africa’s first automotive city.

The Tshwane Automotive SEZ is estimated to create over 8 700 jobs during the construction of the first phase of the project, with around 2 100 permanent jobs for operations. Thousands of additional jobs will be added as it evolves into a multi-faceted hub designed to bolster the manufacturing capacity and global competitiveness of the South African automotive industry, while contributing to job creation, skills development and the economic upliftment of local communities.

City of Tshwane Administrator, Mpho Nawa, while speaking at the Premier’s brief function said: “In developing the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone we are sure to restore the much-needed hope to our people where thousands of jobs will be created over the next two years. With billions of Rands to be invested in this region, we will see the broadening and participation of SMMEs from the surrounding communities and bring the much-needed stimulation of our economy”. Nawa went on to thank the DTIC, Gauteng Provincial government and City of Tshwane through their agencies for the sterling work that saw the birth of the Tshwane Automotive SEZ. He also commended Ford Motor Company for the bold steps to continue investing in the South African economy, without which we wouldn’t have the TASEZ.

A key milestone in the formation of the Tshwane Automotive SEZ was the establishment of the board in March this year, which is chaired by Lionel October, director general of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition. The board comprises representatives from all three spheres of government, along with two senior executives from FMCSA: VP of Operations, Ockert Berry and Dhiren Vanmali, Ford’s executive director of Government Affairs for Africa. Ford also holds a key position in the technical Steering Committee that is leading the implementation of the project.

“The formal establishment of the board was instrumental in strategically driving the project forward in conjunction with all three spheres of government, and Ford is directly involved by bringing in several of our automotive component suppliers that have committed to establishing operations within the TASEZ to support our local vehicle production,” explains Ockert Berry.

“The unexpected COVID-19 lockdown unfortunately delayed the project by several months, and also impacted the disbursement of the initial funds for clearing of the site and the commencement of the bulk infrastructure implementation,” Berry says. “However, extensive design work was done in the interim, and the construction teams were on-site from the beginning of August, with significant earthworks already completed over the past month."

By the end of August, over 95 000m2 of the main site adjacent to Ford’s Silverton Assembly Plant had been cleared, with more than 10 500m3 of top soil hauled or stockpiled for construction.

“The TASEZ board developed a comprehensive recovery plan with all key stakeholders to ensure that the project meets the targeted deadlines for the bulk infrastructure to be completed and the top structures to be built,” Berry adds. “We are confident that most of our suppliers will be able to take occupation of their facilities as planned during the first half of 2021 thanks to the commitment of the appointed contractors.”

The Tshwane Automotive SEZ has seen keen interest from Ford’s suppliers, according to Dhiren Vanmali. “When we announced the TASEZ last year we had expressions of interest from nine supplier companies,” he says. “We currently have 12 suppliers that have committed to setting up operations within the SEZ with an anticipated investment of over R4.3-billion in the economy, and another 10 have shown keen interest. Accordingly, the team is already hard at work on the next phases of the project beyond the initial 81ha site.” Once completed, the SEZ will span 204ha of land currently owned by the City of Tshwane.

With the economic empowerment of local communities being one of the overarching principles of the Tshwane Automotive SEZ, the board has established a comprehensive community engagement framework to drive this process.

“Employment, skills development and creating opportunities for individuals as well as small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) from the surrounding areas is fundamental to the TASEZ, and is an integral part of Ford’s commitment to empowering South Africans to create a brighter future for this country,” Vanmali states.

“We are working closely with all of the relevant stakeholders to facilitate this through our community engagement framework that comprises the TASEZ board with representatives from all three spheres of government, FMCSA, CDC, business forum representatives and community leaders. We have also appointed community liaison officers who engage with local community members.”

Additionally, an [online TASEZ SMME portal](https://www.tasez.co.za/smme.php) has been created specifically for this project, allowing SMMEs to register and tender for various elements of the construction work. Aside from simply creating jobs, the initiative will also train and mentor SMMEs, equipping them with essential skills and experience that will enable them to expand their businesses and create additional jobs beyond the scope of this particular project. A [jobs portal](https://www.tasez.co.za/careers.php) has also been added for individuals wishing to apply for career opportunities.

For more information on the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone visit: [www.tasez.co.za](http://www.tasez.co.za)

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