

EWS thanks residents for patience during construction of the Northern Aqueduct Augmentation

Work on Durban's R250 million Northern Aqueduct Augmentation (NAA) project is gaining momentum and this much needed bulk infrastructure project is on track for commissioning by year end.

Ednick Msweli, Head of eThekweni Water and Sanitation (EWS), thanked Umhlanga and Phoenix residents for their patience during disruptions along busy routes and said that the finalisation of the pipeline, which included extensive quality checks and some unforeseen interventions to rectify a few problems, would ensure that Durban had some of the best water infrastructure in South Africa.

"The good news is that the contractor will start testing as early as the end of July. Water taken from the Umhlanga Reservoir will be fed into the pipeline and the pipeline will be filled all the way to Phoenix and Waterloo for testing," he said.

Msweli pointed out that, when undertaking a project of this magnitude, it was imperative to ensure that all safety and quality specifications were strictly adhered to. In order to ensure that pipe integrity was not compromised and that this important infrastructure was able to serve Durban's communities for decades to come, extensive checks had to be carried out.

To update residents on progress, it is noted that:

- Work continues along Autumn Drive in Umhlanga and this road will be out of commission for the next two months. The soil above the pipeline is being excavated and recompact and this work is expected to be completed during July.
- All the necessary work on the pipeline in Herrwood Drive in Umhlanga is expected to be complete by the end of July with the reworking of road layer works and the installation of a new wearing course continuing during August and September
- Work along Phoenix Highway will commence again towards the end of June and is expected to be completed by the end of August. This will not only include further quality testing of the pipeline itself but also wearing course completion, kerbing and storm

water system installation and median rehabilitation. The extent of the work along Phoenix Highway will unfortunately result in significant traffic disruption. However, once this segment of the work is complete, the pipeline will be commissioned.

Msweli explained that the NAA forms part of long term plans to facilitate efficient delivery of water to the North of Durban.

The existing Northern Aqueduct, a network of bulk supply pipelines that serves the north eastern portion of eThekweni north of the Umgeni River, south of the Ohlanga River and east of Ntuzuma, conveys potable water from the Durban Heights Waterworks to a large number of terminal reservoirs in the system that, in turn, supply water to residents and businesses.

The Northern Aqueduct “Augmentation” (enlargement or expansion) has become necessary as the existing infrastructure has reached capacity due to growth in demand. This means that, even if there is sufficient water to meet current needs, there is not sufficient network capacity to deliver it to areas where it is needed.

“In addition, planned developments in the north east of Durban are expected to add a substantial new water demand at the tail end of the Northern Aqueduct, exacerbating its existing capacity problems. It is important that we proactively address these constraints as on-going investment in the development of this area that will provide much needed income for the city and urgently needed jobs for our people,” he added.

The current construction of the NAA project has been divided into two contracts - a 6 km section of the pipeline that begins at Duffs Road and ends at the Phoenix 2 reservoir and a 22 km segment of the pipeline that stretches from the Phoenix 2 Reservoir in Phoenix, continues to Waterloo with a branch line to Umhlanga. The new Blackburn Reservoir which is currently under construction, will be supplied through the newly constructed pipeline.

The Blackburn Reservoir will supply water to the new Cornubia development and the first compartment will hold 17 million litres of water.