



May 2016

Parks Tau: Johannesburg's steward

Last week Johannesburg's Executive Mayor, Parks Tau, presented his last State of the City for his current term. While Tau is able to boast an impressive list of accomplishments during his tenure, most notably the stabilisation of the City's finances, he is not guaranteed a second term should the ANC lose its majority hold of Johannesburg in upcoming elections, or should he not be pronounced as Mayoral candidate by the ANC. Our new monthly profile series highlights the importance of single individuals or personalities in the local government domain and kicks off with Tau as an example of Gauteng's pressurised Metro mayors.

An accomplished technocratic cadre with a vulnerable future

Mpho Franklyn Parks Tau epitomises Johannesburg's most positive hopes and aspirations - a Soweto-born resident, with an activist past who has garnered a robust understanding of the complexities of managing a fast-growing developing economy city.

His former roles as Member of the Mayoral Committee for Development Planning, Transport and the Environment, as well as Finance and Economic Development in Johannesburg built the strong skills base needed by a competent Mayor in the Gauteng Global City Region, bolstered by his political stature as Regional Chairperson of the ANC's Johannesburg region (en.wikipedia.org, joburg.org.za).

Under Tau's tenure (2011-16), Johannesburg saw a strengthening of its audit opinions, credit ratings, infrastructure spending and capital reserves. Tau has driven the vision of a "smart city" articulated in a Growth and Development Strategy; focussed on economic development and job creation, with the Rea Vaya bus rapid transit (BRT)'s "Corridors of Freedom" laying the grid for more inclusive social and economic participation (www.joburg.org.za).

But it should also be remembered that it was under Tau that the billing crisis erupted in the City, tarnishing the City's reputation and relationship with many residents. This aside, opposition criticism has surrounded Tau for not opening tender bid committees to public scrutiny (www.enca.com) notwithstanding Tau's establishment of an Ombudsman to independently resolve disputes with the City. Also, while Tau has a Jozi@Work Programme to

combat unemployment, he is not viewed as a friend of the street trader after the controversial Operation Clean Sweep (www.dailymaverick.co.za) several years ago.

Tau has yet to be formally pronounced as mayoral candidate for Johannesburg by the ANC. His greatest challenge, if pronounced as Mayoral candidate, will be in convincing voters of a similar profile to himself - young, urban professionals - that the ANC will be the best party to take Johannesburg forward in the next term.

© Municipal IQ. Not for circulation or quotation without permission.

You are receiving this as a registered user of Municipal IQ

[Unsubscribe](#)