

City to implement mudslide prevention measures

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The City of Cape Town will draw on all available expertise in order to mitigate against possible landslides in areas which have been destabilised by last week's fire. Furthermore, the stormwater system will be prepared for increased siltation in order to prevent blockages. Read more below:

The City would like to assure residents that appropriate steps are being taken to prevent mudslides and rock falls in the areas that were recently destabilised by last week's veld fires in the southern peninsula. Fires such as these damage the vegetation that plays an important role in holding mountain soil in place, which can leave roads and homes on the mountain vulnerable to rock and mud slides during periods of heavy rain.

At this stage, the City is engaging specialist consultants to undertake detailed investigations on our behalf, and to propose and manage the implementation of remedial measures. An emergency supply chain management deviation has been obtained for this purpose.

We expect to have consultants appointed during the course of next week, and remedial work should start in time to pre-empt the winter rains.

In addition, soil and rocks that have been loosened can create maintenance challenges for the stormwater system. The City will therefore undertake intensive cleaning and maintenance of the existing stormwater systems in the built-up areas below the fire zones in order to reduce the possibility of blockages in these systems. In addition, gabion weirs and stilling ponds will be constructed at selected positions across the natural water courses on the burnt mountain slopes. These will reduce the velocity of floodwaters in the streams and trap heavy silt and large rocks before they reach the intakes to the piped systems under the built-up areas.

'The City is able to draw on a wealth of experience when it comes to this kind of project, having experienced fires of a similar scale in 2000, and smaller-scale blazes throughout the interim years. As such, we have first-hand knowledge of which measures are best suited. This allows us to effectively oversee the work of consultants and, in many instances, undertake necessary interventions without being held back by the administrative procedures inherent in the supply chain management process.

'Continual assessments of potentially problematic areas will take place, and any necessary traffic diversions and disaster risk management measures will be implemented by the relevant departments,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member: Transport for Cape Town, Councillor Brett Herron.

END

ISSUED BY:

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