

To: The Municipal Manager City of Johannesburg Rates & Taxes Department

ratescomments@joburg.org.za

Glen Austin Residents Association comments on the 2026/27 Rates Policy

13th May 2026

We hereby submit a formal comment to the City of Johannesburg's regarding the 2022 reclassification of the small-holding properties in Gen Austin Agricultural Holdings from *Agricultural Residential* to *Residential*, and to the continued application of full Residential rates and tariffs in the Draft Medium-Term Budget.

This comment is submitted in terms of:

- **Section 78 of the Municipal Property Rates Act (MPRA)** – review of property category
- **Section 15 of the MPRA** – rebates, exemptions, and reductions
- **The City's Rates Policy** – principles of equity, affordability, and fairness
- **The MFMA** – requirement for realistic and affordable tariffs

Removal of the Agricultural Residential Category

The City's Rates Policy removed the **Agricultural Residential** category entirely in 2022. This category historically applied to the smallholdings and peri-urban properties such as in Glen Austin who do not enjoy full municipal services.

The removal of this category has resulted in:

- Automatic reclassification to **Residential**
- A significant increase in property values and rates payable
- No transitional arrangements
- No replacement category for peri-urban or low-service, no infrastructure areas.

This change was implemented without consultation, despite its material financial impact.

Glen Austin AH does not receive suburban-level municipal services

Although we are now billed at the same rate as fully serviced suburbs, our area does not receive the services that justify the Residential tariff. Specifically:

- No waterborne sewerage
- Little to no effective street lighting
- Many untarred roads and low cost tarred roads designed for agricultural holding that cannot cope with trucks and heavy traffic.
- No stormwater drainage infrastructure
- No public transport infrastructure
- No municipal parks, pavements, or sidewalks

The City's own Rates Policy states that tariffs must be equitable, affordable, and must consider service levels. Applying full Residential tariffs to an area with rural-level services and infrastructure is inconsistent with these principles.

Adjoining Gauteng municipalities offer a rebate for peri-urban properties such as Glen Austin and offer a "no-services land" rebate of 50% where services are not provided. Parts of Glen Austin are a registered conservancy and the area operates as a "Green Lung" for Johannesburg and Gauteng yet we are charged the same rates percentage as built-up areas with full infrastructure.

Additionally, despite repeated complaints from residents and our resident's association, the City has failed to enforce its by-laws in our area. This has allowed unauthorised commercial activity and illegal buildings to proliferate, including truck and coach stops, storage facilities, vehicle workshops, and party/conference venues. These operate in a residential zone from early morning to late evening. These activities generate persistent morning, evening and weekend noise, increased traffic on our low-cost roads, and public safety and environmental concerns as several of these facilities are fuel tankers! This lack of enforcement leads to the material devaluing of properties and degrading the quality of life for residents. We request immediate enforcement action, a clear timeline for compliance, and confirmation of the steps the City will take to restore lawful land use in our neighbourhood.

Financial impact of the 2023/24–2025/26 tariff proposals

The Draft Budget proposes increases in property rates, water and sanitation as well as our erratic waste collection. These increases apply equally to our community despite the absence of equivalent service delivery.

This creates a service–tariff mismatch and places an unfair financial burden on residents.

Requested relief

We request that the City urgently conduct a formal service-level assessment.

Before continuing the full Residential tariffs, the City must assess and confirm whether the infrastructure exists.

Given the lack of services, along with other Gauteng municipalities, the Rates Policy already allows a 50% rebate where the City cannot provide infrastructure services. Our area meets these criteria.

We accept the need for fair and lawful rates. However, we cannot accept being charged full Residential tariffs while receiving none of the services associated with that category.

We therefore request:

- A formal review of our infrastructure and services.
- A meeting or public engagement with the relevant officials.
- A written response outlining the City's intended corrective action.

We look forward to your urgent attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Glen Austin Residents Association

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