TRACC

TSHWANE RESIDENTS' ALLIANCE FOR CIVIC COORDINATION

RECORD OF THE DISCUSSION WITH THE FREEDOM FRONT PLUS: THE 2026 MANIFESTO AND TSHWANE

Wednesday 30 September 2026, 18:00 to 20:00 • Van den Berg Hall, Herfsblaar Retirement Village, 1244 Webb Road, Queenswood

1. Nature of the meeting

TRACC met the Freedom Front Plus to discuss the party's municipal election manifesto and the questions that arise from it for Tshwane and the Moot. Each theme below begins with a commitment from the party's own manifesto, sets it against the position in Tshwane as TRACC understands it, puts the questions sent to the party in advance, and records the party's response.

This was a discussion, not a debate. TRACC is a non-political civic body and does not argue for or against any policy. It asks, records the answers, and publishes them. Every party contesting the Moot's wards is invited on the same terms and questioned on the same ten themes, each on the basis of its own manifesto, so that residents can compare the answers. The records of sessions with other parties will be published alongside this one as those sessions take place.

How to read this record

Several of the questions put to the party contained more than one part. Each part is set out separately below and marked *Answered*, *Answered in part* or *Not explicitly answered*, according to what was said on the night. The marking is a record of coverage, not an assessment of the merits of any answer, and the same method is applied to every party. The party's response to the theme as a whole follows the questions, in the party's own words.

This record was compiled from two independent sets of notes taken on the night and checked against the recording of the session. It is a summary and not a verbatim transcript. Responses given in Afrikaans have been translated into English. The recording of the session is published alongside this record, and the full exchange on any point can be heard there. The record was provided to the Freedom Front Plus for correction of fact before signature and publication.

Manifesto quotations are from the Freedom Front Plus Municipal Elections Manifesto 2026 as published on vfplus.org.za. The Tshwane figures are drawn from the City's 2024/25 Annual Report and 2026/27 tariff schedule; TRACC will gladly share the underlying analysis and welcomes correction of any figure.

2. The session

Date and venue	Wednesday 30 September 2026, 18:00 to 20:00. Van den Berg Hall, Herfsblaar Retirement Village, 1244 Webb Road, Queenswood.
Party representatives	Willie Spies, mayoral candidate for Tshwane, and Roché Grebe.
Moderator	James Black, who put the questions and kept time. Follow-up questions were limited to: What is the amount? By which date? How will residents measure it? Who is accountable? Would your councillors vote for that?
Proceedings	Adrianus welcomed everyone and introduced TRACC. James Black introduced the format and welcomed Willie Spies and Roché Grebe. The party gave an opening statement, after which the ten themes were put by the moderator, followed by questions from TRACC executive members.

Audience	Delegates of TRACC's affiliated resident associations and sectoral bodies.
Record and publication	The record was compiled from notes and the recording, sent to the party for correction of fact, signed by the party, and published on www.tracc.org.za with the recording and alongside the records of sessions with other parties.

3. Opening statement by the Freedom Front Plus

Delivered by Willie Spies. Translated from Afrikaans where applicable.

The Freedom Front Plus was founded in 1994 as an outgrowth of the conservative parties. It has an Afrikaner support base and is a value-based party. It is important that the party is not merely competitive and critical, but more than that. Weigh our contribution, and weigh the other political parties too, by what they actually do.

South Africa moved from white minority rule to majority rule. Cultural systems were accommodated, but all were incorporated into a one-person-one-vote system. A voter is either aligned with the minority or with the majority, and tends to vote for the biggest party they are aligned with. That pattern is strongly entrenched, and it has a downside: if you vote only for the strongest party, you do not ask what its values are, what it stands for, or how it behaves once it is in government.

In the 2016 municipal election the ANC began to weaken and fell below 50%, and coalition politics started. The perception is that coalitions are chaotic. The Freedom Front Plus takes a different view: a coalition is an opportunity to bring the values that matter to us back into politics. The question is how we make sure our voice is heard again within the coalition dynamic, and how we again form part of the 50%.

Proportional representation apportions seats in a council. Tshwane has 214 seats. A party that receives 50% of the votes holds 50% of those seats, in direct proportion. The benefit of proportional representation is that it gives the minority a place to be represented, its vote heard and its values incorporated.

The party's broad principles were set out as follows:

1. Christian family values.
2. Communities and civil society — civil society in action. We want to make sure our voices are heard. TRACC and the Freedom Front Plus align on this. A divide has been created over the past 30 years, and the party wants to empower civil society and repair the gap that has arisen between politics and the community.
3. Communities must be able to take decisions as close to the community as possible. You must have a say in what happens in your own neighbourhood. Tshwane is roughly two-thirds the size of Cyprus. The metro must break itself down and organise itself as close to the grassroots as possible.
4. Water, corruption, BEE and cadre employment. Under the previous government large established companies did the work. By contrast, the Lynnwood project was given to a construction company that was not an approved company, and start-ups are paid in advance by the city council. Rooiwal is another example. Corrupt officials must be removed and a moratorium placed on advance payments. The city must also be made safe: the metro police must be brought under good command and onto a proper management system, so that a

city is created which can be turned around. The party wants to stand in a coalition with other parties that want to do the same — a coalition that does not include the ANC.

4. Questions arising from the manifesto, and the party's responses

A. Rates and tariffs

Manifesto: *"Tax and tariff hikes should not exceed the inflation rate."*

Tshwane: The 2026/27 increases are 8.8% for electricity, 10% for water, 5% for sanitation, 5% for property rates and 4.1% for refuse, against CPI of roughly 3 to 4%. The City's budget is reported as unfunded.

Q1. Is the inflation cap a commitment for every year of the term, including in a coalition? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. Will your councillors vote against a budget that breaches it? *[Not explicitly answered]*

Q3. If the City's revenue cannot sustain services at CPI increases, what gives way first: the increase, the service, or the cost base? *[Not explicitly answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

The manifesto is a guideline, not a rule book. It guides the decisions we take. It is not possible to follow the guideline come what may: if a disaster strikes the City, it may become necessary to depart from the CPI commitment and adapt.

Yes, we are committed to the inflation cap as our starting point for every decision to be made. This is what we promised our voters and this is how we will implement it.

The manifesto statement is the confirmed intention of the party, but it is to be applied as a norm and a guideline according to the unique challenges and circumstances of Tshwane. Otherwise it could be self-limiting.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The CPI cap is adopted as the starting point for every decision to be made, applied as a norm and guideline according to the circumstances of Tshwane, and capable of departure in exceptional circumstances such as a disaster.

B. Ward-based reinvestment

Manifesto: *"A substantial portion of the tax money collected in your ward (your property rates and levies) should be reinvested there. The better the collection rate of a ward, the more money should be spent on that ward's priorities."*

Tshwane: The Moot's wards have among the higher collection rates in the City and, on our analysis, receive a small fraction of the capital budget.

Q1. What does "substantial portion" mean as a percentage, and how would it be shown in the budget? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. Would you support publishing, per ward, the rates collected and the capital and maintenance spent? *[Answered]*

Q3. What would the Moot's wards receive under this principle in your first budget? *[Not explicitly answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

The incumbent leadership of Tshwane has lost sight of the fact that its available funding is its own community's money, for judicious application and investment, and not to be squandered by mere ad hoc discretion. At present these applications and investments are not reported at ward level in Tshwane. That is the direction the party wants to go in and is committed to changing. Ideally percentages should be stated and reported.

When we prepared our turnaround plan, there was no ward-by-ward information available. Ward 47 (Moreleta Park) and ward 42 (Waterkloof Ridge) owe the City the most, although bad debt is more or less the same everywhere and those wards also pay the most. Many government buildings do not pay their rates and taxes.

We want a ward-by-ward record of how much is paid in rates and taxes, so that every single ward knows exactly what it contributes to the fiscus. If we can tell people that a given percentage will come back to their area, we can build a culture of payment. That must be published, and a fixed percentage must go back to that area.

Tax money is not the state's money — it belongs to the taxpayers. They should be able to see how the money they pay comes back into their own area.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party supports publishing, per ward, the rates collected and the capital and maintenance spent, with percentages stated and reported, and a fixed percentage returned to the ward that raised it.

C. Maintenance floor

Manifesto: *"At least 8% of the book value of property, plant and equipment should be spent on maintenance annually."*

Tshwane: Tshwane spent 2.1% in 2024/25 on our analysis, against a National Treasury norm of 8%. The gap since 2015 is estimated at R24.4 billion.

Q1. Over how many years would you move Tshwane from 2.1% to 8%, and what is the target for year one? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. Would you support ring-fencing the maintenance budget so that it cannot be diverted in-year? *[Answered in part]*

Q3. Where does the money come from while the City cannot borrow? *[Answered in part]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

The underspending on maintenance is highly visible and must be acknowledged. It must be changed judiciously, as funds can be sourced, and gradually over time towards the stated guideline, over three to four years.

The City earns about R50 billion a year from various sources. About R5 billion is rates and taxes, only about 10% of that figure. Electricity sales bring in about R10 to R15 billion. About half the budget comes from grants and subsidies from central government, and a small portion of the fuel levy also comes to the City.

A specific percentage must be earmarked for maintenance, and it must go to 8%. Rooiwal is an example. In 2014, litigation obtained a court order against the City to maintain Rooiwal, at a cost of R24 million. The City did not obey that order. The result was a breakdown and R400 million spent on capital projects that failed.

On how quickly this can be done: budgeting always has to move gradually, pressing the figures up on a year-to-year basis. It is a balancing act. The manifesto is our guideline. Within three to four years.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

Maintenance spending is to move towards the 8% norm within three to four years, with a specific percentage earmarked for maintenance and the figure raised year on year.

D. Conditional grants and capital

Manifesto: *"Conditional grants should be used solely for that purpose. There may be no underspending. Critical infrastructure – sewerage, water, electricity and roads – before any funds are spent on sports stadiums."*

Tshwane: Capital expenditure is 4.5% of the budget against a norm of 10 to 20%.

Q1. What capital share of the budget would you target by the end of the term? *[Answered]*

Q2. Would your councillors vote against any capital budget that funds non-critical projects while the water, sewer and electricity backlog remains? *[Answered]*

Q3. Would you support publishing every grant's allocation, spend and underspend quarterly? *[Not explicitly answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

There has been a lack of focus on what capital investment is critical to support key primary services such as water services, electricity and roads, and thereby the economy of Tshwane. **The party is committed to securing and achieving a capital investment budget percentage of 15%.**

We are committed to ensuring that the City focuses on what is important. Socialist governments tend to spend too much money on things that are not critical. The role of government is to create an environment that is conducive to growth and development; instead, governments are taking wealth away.

Our approach is to spend money on the essence of what a municipality is there for: water, electricity and safety. That is the basic purpose of a municipality, and capital should be spent on those critical issues. If you spend money on all sorts of luxuries, you move away from what the city is for. First prize is communities that are uplifted. Do not overtax.

We are committed to securing critical infrastructure investment. We can commit that our councillors will support critical projects and not non-critical projects.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

A capital investment budget of 15% is to be secured and achieved. Councillors will support critical infrastructure projects and will not support non-critical projects while the water, sewer and electricity backlogs remain.

E. Water losses and billing

Manifesto: *"Modernising water management, investing in existing infrastructure and the prompt detection of water leaks. Thorough record-keeping of all water purchases, distribution and sales. Modernised meter readings, smart meters and area meters."*

Tshwane: Non-revenue water is 39% against a norm of 15 to 30%, about R1.3 billion a year. Electricity losses are 21.46% against a norm of 7 to 10%. Meters are widely estimated rather than read.

Q1. What non-revenue-water and electricity-loss percentages would you set as end-of-term targets? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. By when would every functioning meter be read monthly? *[Not explicitly answered]*

Q3. What is your plan for the Moot's ageing substations, which the City has not published a condition assessment of? *[Not explicitly answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

The stated norms should remain the key guiding targets, for both non-revenue water and electricity losses.

On water specifically, the norm set out in the question is the target: between 15 and 20%, but closer to 15% would be an acceptable level of water wastage. We will work towards achieving that by the end of the term.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

Non-revenue water is to be brought towards 15% by the end of the term, and the stated norms are to remain the key guiding targets for both non-revenue water and electricity losses.

F. Government debt and collection

Manifesto: *"A decisive effort must be made to collect government departments' outstanding debt to municipalities."*

Tshwane: The collection rate fell from 90% to 85.6% against a norm of 95%; R2.18 billion was not collected in 2024/25.

Q1. What collection rate would you target and by when? *[Not explicitly answered]*

Q2. What specifically would your councillors do about government departments in arrears, which the City has been unable to compel for years? *[Answered]*

Q3. What is your position on councillors and officials who are themselves in arrears? *[Answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

I touched on non-paying government departments in my introductory remarks. It is a huge problem, and the incumbent coalition has been reluctant and limited in its response. Departments that do not pay should be disconnected, without punishing the wrong people, such as school children.

Debt collection is one aspect of proper management. From my background I know that there are various ways in which debts should be collected, and disconnection is only one mechanism. Vacant properties should be sold in execution, since disconnection will have no effect on such properties. The City should issue summons, obtain judgment and sell the property in execution, and the conditions of sale should require the purchaser to pay the arrears on the property.

The City is also not making sound use of the legal resources available to it. The City has a panel of attorneys, but none of them have offices in Pretoria. They instruct correspondents in Johannesburg at excessive rates, which makes legal action prohibitively expensive. With disconnections, the City appoints a contractor who receives a fee per disconnection, and contractors earn bigger commissions for disconnections in affluent areas because the outstanding amounts are bigger. This results in a vicious circle.

There are examples of state institutions that appoint good lawyers at fair rates, such as SARS. Those firms are willing to work at lower rates because it is high-volume work with guaranteed payment. Some of the best firms in the country are in Pretoria. They have the competence to collect this debt; it simply has to be done. So it is a combination of disconnection and collection.

On councillors: a quarterly report is made on councillors who do not pay, but it lacks effective follow-through. No Freedom Front Plus councillor has ever appeared on that list.

Overall, a comprehensive debt collection strategy and system needs priority focused attention.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

Non-paying government departments are to be disconnected where this does not harm unintended recipients, combined with summons, judgment and sale in execution against vacant properties; the City's own legal resources are to be used soundly; and a comprehensive debt collection strategy and system is to receive priority focused attention.

G. Financial accountability and MPAC

Manifesto: *"Municipal Public Accounts Committees function properly to exercise oversight and conduct investigations. Officials responsible for squandering public funds must face consequences. All contracts concluded between municipal councils and service providers should be disclosed for public scrutiny."*

Tshwane: Only 56% of targets were met; the Auditor-General could not verify some results; two oversight committees held no meetings; MPAC has recorded resistance to consequence management.

Q1. What three actions would your councillors take in the first 12 months to make oversight work, and how would residents see that they happened? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. Would you support splitting the Utilities oversight portfolio into dedicated committees with independent technical support? *[Answered]*

Q3. Would you support a published quarterly register of Auditor-General and MPAC findings showing who is responsible and whether the deadline was met? *[Answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

Yes to all of them. These are all very good suggestions and we take them with us. We will ensure that they are implemented.

Oversight must become effective and functional. MPAC is important, but it must be chaired by a competent person: the chairmanship of oversight committees requires the careful selection of capable leaders with both professional capability and a commitment to courageous action. The City government must be brave and strong against the criminals. The only way we will fix the city is if we are brave.

One of the committees that did not meet is the committee exercising oversight over the metro police, which has 5,300 personnel. The finance committee did not have a chairperson.

It is critical for professional people to get involved in local politics. Councillors serve part-time. We need experienced leaders in the community to become more directly involved in Tshwane, especially to overcome the limited capability within the City. It is also critical to ensure attendance at oversight committee meetings, and to elect enough people to council.

The party is promoting the idea of voluntary committee support within Tshwane: committees of retired experts working on a pro bono basis — task teams of retired experts who become involved.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

The party answered yes to all three questions: three actions on oversight in the first 12 months, splitting the Utilities oversight portfolio into dedicated committees with independent technical support, and a published quarterly register of Auditor-General and MPAC findings. Oversight chairmanships are to be filled by capable people, and voluntary committees of retired experts are to be promoted.

H. Accountable officers

Manifesto: *"Accountable officers (municipal and city managers) must be criminally prosecuted for violating legislation. Complaints will be lodged with supervisory institutions such as the Public Protector, the South African Police Service and the Hawks."*

Tshwane: Council appoints the City Manager, holds him accountable, and can suspend or replace him. The MFMA makes the accounting officer personally liable for specified failures.

Q1. Short of prosecution, what would your councillors do when the City Manager or an MMC does not answer an oversight committee, does not implement a council resolution, or does not act on an audit finding? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. What is the sequence, and who initiates it? *[Not explicitly answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

The solutions lie in the actual application of the legislated legal processes. There are processes prescribed in the legislation and those processes must be followed. Our councillors will do what the law permits them to do.

Rooiwal is an example, where two court orders were obtained.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

Councillors are to apply the legal processes prescribed in legislation, and will do what the law permits them to do.

I. Communities delivering where the City cannot

Manifesto: *"Where a municipality does not have the capacity to deliver a service properly, the community, businesses and civil organisations should be given leeway. Freedom Front Plus councillors will work closely with civil rights organisations, neighbourhood watches, chambers of commerce."*

Tshwane: The Moot's resident associations and Die Moot Projek already maintain parks and verges the City does not. TRACC is a federation of the kinds of bodies the manifesto names.

Q1. What would this look like in practice: a formal agreement with a resident association, a budget contribution, or something else? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. Would you support a mechanism by which a community that maintains a City asset is credited for it? *[Answered in part]*

Q3. Would your councillors meet TRACC twice a year, in public, to report on the commitments made tonight? *[Answered in part]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

The party is committed to Tshwane becoming much more sensitive to its own community's needs. Tshwane's leadership has to do this. We have no choice — we have to do it. It is not possible for the City to turn itself around without partnerships of this kind with resident associations, and we must make sure that these partnerships multiply and improve.

Partnering and partnerships are essential. The CUPS concept, although initiated by the party, does need to be reformed, because it has become too onerous for communities to take on. At present only a tiny portion of this work is done in partnership, for example with AfriForum. It makes economic sense to use AfriForum. The question is how we are going to multiply partnerships of this kind.

On crediting a community that maintains a City asset: the idea is supported in principle but would need careful negotiation.

Our philosophy is that we have an overweight government. We are committed to engaging with communities, rather than expecting communities to come to us.

The party welcomed the initiative, preparation and ideas tabled in TRACC's discussion document, and remains available and open to further interaction towards the stated ends. Willie Spies confirmed that he will attend a meeting with TRACC.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

Partnerships with resident associations are to be expanded and multiplied; the CUPS concept is to be reformed because it has become too onerous for communities; crediting a community that maintains a City asset is supported in principle, subject to careful negotiation; and the party

remains available for further interaction with TRACC, with Willie Spies confirming that he will attend a meeting.

J. Coalitions

Manifesto: *"From the outset, there should be certainty regarding the coalition government's negotiated positions on aspects such as appointments, budgets, rates and taxes, and spatial development. The agreed-upon governance model should direct all future decision-making by the coalition government."*

Tshwane: Tshwane has been governed by coalitions since 2016. The manifesto itself makes the coalition agreement the governing instrument.

Q1. Would you commit to publishing the coalition agreement in full? *[Answered in part]*

Q2. Which of tonight's commitments would you make non-negotiable in coalition talks? *[Answered in part]*

Q3. If a coalition partner tabled a budget that breached your inflation cap or the maintenance floor, how would your councillors vote? *[Not explicitly answered]*

FREEDOM FRONT PLUS RESPONSE

On transparency in coalitions, our own experience since 2016 is that a lack of transparency undermined the coalition in Tshwane of which we were part. As we understood the position at the time, there were two arrangements running alongside each other: a public coalition between the Freedom Front Plus, the DA, the ACDP and the IFP, and a separate arrangement that was not made public, between the DA and the EFF. On our understanding, that separate arrangement provided that although the EFF did not form part of the government, it had the right to sign off on appointments and similar matters, which in effect gave it a veto over decisions taken. The fuller account given on the night can be heard on the recording.

Our position is therefore that certain political parties cannot be trusted and that coalitions of that kind must be avoided. Coalition agreements should be transparent, both visible and reportable to communities, so that all parties remain committed and accountable to their communities and constituents for any deviation from the agreement. The agreement should be a public document.

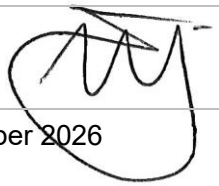
It is difficult to say what is non-negotiable in a coalition. I am not inclined to say that we will not enter a coalition if particular conditions are not met. But we do support a transparent coalition.

COMMITMENT RECORDED

Coalition agreements are to be transparent and published in full, visible and reportable to communities, so that all parties remain accountable to their constituents for any deviation from the agreement.

5. Confirmation by the Freedom Front Plus

The Freedom Front Plus confirms that this record is a fair and accurate summary of the party's responses at the TRACC session held on 30 September 2026, subject to any corrections of fact submitted to TRACC in writing, and consents to its publication by TRACC on www.tracc.org.za, together with the recording of the session and alongside the records of sessions with other parties.

	For the Freedom Front Plus	For TRACC
Full name	Willie Durand Spies	
Position	Regional Leader VF Plus	
Signature		
Date	18 October 2026	

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