



GAUTENG PROVINCE

ROADS AND TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH

Speech delivered at launch of Phase 2 of GLIX Project on 29 November 2017 at the Palm Continental Hotel, Johannesburg

Members of Mayoral Committees for Transport

The GLI:X Delegation from Germany

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's launch of Phase 2 of the Green Logistics Indicators Project (GLI:X) presents a creative example of sustainable, multi-stakeholder partnerships by the municipalities, the Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and the Nexus and GESI Institutes.

The Joint Declaration of Intent signed last year between German Vice-Minister, Gunther Adler, and myself on behalf of the Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport, was the initial, practical expression of this partnership. Today we are pleased that the project moves to the next phase.

This launch marks the beginning of the next phase of the GLI:X Project. The project is gaining momentum by establishing its footprint in the crucially important area of logistics by endeavouring to make it greener, faster, more cost effective, more equitable and safer.

The Gauteng City-Region values the GLI:X Project as it begins to address the mobility and logistic challenges facing our region, which are outlined in the 25-Year Integrated Transport Master Plan (ITMP25).

Undoubtedly, Gauteng's mobility challenges will intensify over time. Population and vehicle growth due to rapid in-migration, together with the historical spatial challenges we face, is already resulting in heightened congestion on our roads. This is glaringly apparent during peak hours. We are now spending more and more of time in our vehicles stuck in traffic trying to get from one destination to another. Clearly, this has an adverse, knock-on effect on our economic performance as a province as traffic congestion slows down the movement of people, goods and services.

There are no easy solutions for us on the horizon. Traffic congestion, air and noise pollution, and inefficient mobility challenges will harm all of us in terms of our physical wellbeing, environment and increased economic costs.

With a GDP that has dwindled and that is still under downward pressure, we must achieve all the goals that we have set for ourselves in terms of the GLI:X Project. It is precisely at such a moment in our history that we have to think smarter, more synergistically and optimise our resources by achieving more with less. This partnership forged with the municipalities, provincial government and external stakeholders has given me hope that workable and synergistic opportunities will open up to achieve higher levels of economic growth.

The GLI:X Project is a good example of what can be done under a future Transport Authority. Multiple stakeholder engagements, governance and partnerships are critical to address the immense challenges facing us as a city-region. In a complex region such as ours, there are no separate or independent solutions for our challenges. The idea that each municipality, or for that matter the province itself, can go it alone and seek a different destiny, is not really possible. We are spatially inter-linked and integrated. Therefore, we must co-operate more vigorously on issues of common interest such as freight and logistics.

The development of the cargo eBike as a last mile freight solution offers new possibilities for our congested cities. It is an example of a logistic solution that emerged during the GLI:X workshops. We are pleased to have with us today the pioneers of the cargo eBikes, Mr Oliver Higson and Stefan Knorr. Their company has a strange, futuristic name that young people will better understand; it is called anywhere.berlin GmbH.

What I like about these cargo bikes is that it is a simple and practical innovation to address a common problem in modern cities. It affords new opportunities to many ordinary people to enter the logistics sector at a cost that makes such entry viable. It does represent a pioneering invention that can help us in part to work our way out of our logistics and mobility crises in congested modern cities. GLI:X has shown us that it is possible to engineer, invent and imagine new possibilities for our cities.

We must not see our challenges as problems, but rather as opportunities for new beginnings. Our cities should enable entrepreneurship to grow based on the cargo eBikes. I am hopeful that these cargo bikes will be manufactured locally at a much lower cost and that they will replace the hand-held pull carts that are so common in our cities. These carts are a sore sight in our cities; they pose a danger both to motorists and the persons who are using them, and they add to the traffic congestion experienced by all of us in our cities.

One of the key aspects of Phase 2 of the GLI:X Project is identifying what data needs to be collected and actually collating the data. At present data relevant to inform policy and business decisions sits in silos across several platforms. Perhaps out of this initiative will come the aggregation of such data, which would give us a more consolidated and integrated database for future planning in this sector. Such an initiative will also facilitate greater collaboration between institutions to share their data, and assist policy-makers and the business community to leverage it optimally and more productively. I trust that it will yield a data analytics programme that will help us to better plan our future in our cities.

I am delighted that the Ekurhuleni and Tshwane Metropolitan Municipalities have taken the initiative to champion the GLI:X Project as part of their municipal competence and functions. It is precisely at the inner city level where logistics poses formidable challenges, and this project can help to address these in the short term. The partnership between the province and municipalities in this regard present possibilities for us to spearhead policy changes that can ameliorate the situation in our cities. When we succeed we will deliver to the Gauteng City-Region a better quality life for all. Failure is not an option; succeed we must.

We commend the GLI:X team for staying the course to make this project a success. We wish them all the success and we commit ourselves to support the project to realise all its possibilities.

Dr Ismail Vadi

Gauteng MEC for Roads and Transport