



GAUTENG PROVINCE

ROADS AND TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH BY MEC ISMAIL VADI AT THE LAUNCH OF THE OCTOBER TRANSPORT MONTH (OTM) CAMPAIGN, 03 OCTOBER 2017

Premier David Makhura
Mayor Mashaba
MMC Makhuba
The Management and Staff of Hollard
Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank the City of Johannesburg for partnering with the Gauteng Provincial Government to launch the 2017 October Transport Month Campaign.

The theme for this year's campaign is: "Transforming and Modernising Public Transport in Gauteng". It talks to the on-going work being done by all three spheres of government to modernise our roads network and transform public transport into an integrated system so that there can be seamless mobility across the province. It should be a reliable, affordable, safe and accessible system. Equally important is that it must be environmentally sustainable.

It is for these reasons that the specific aims of this year's OTM campaign are to:

- - encourage a larger number of citizens to use public transport and reduce traffic congestion;
- - promote public and private sector investment in road and public transport infrastructure;
- - encourage all road users – motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, bikers, taxi drivers etc. - to obey the rules of the road; and
- - to involve all transport stakeholders and the public at large in programmes aimed at popularising these objectives.

We are pleased – and may I say relieved - that the rehabilitation of the Double-Decker, Oxford and Federation bridges has been completed and the three lanes on both sides of the M1 freeway will be opened to traffic shortly. Gratefully, the public has been extremely patient during the long maintenance period and now they can look forward to ease of mobility and less congestion in the next few days.

Since the collapse of the bridges near Grayston Drive and along the N3, and the planned demolition of the bridge at Eufees Road near Pretoria, the public has developed an unusually keen interest in the state of our bridges.

Suddenly, I am getting tweets, Facebook messages and photographs of the condition of our bridges in the province.

This is a positive development – it shows that the public is concerned about protecting our infrastructure and reporting any visible signs of structural damage.

Also, I can indicate that the Engineering Faculty at the University of the Witwatersrand has offered to assist with the survey of provincial and municipal bridges and we are in discussions with the University management to conclude an agreement in this regard.

The provincial department has a road network of 5 638 kilometers, with 4250km being paved roads. The network includes 676 bridges and 428 culverts.

The total asset value of the network is calculated at R25.5 billion. We have been hard at work to maintain and upgrade this network.

Yet, we are deeply disappointed by the damage that is being done to this network by overloaded freight vehicles and at times community protesters.

Here I must condemn in the strongest terms the unwarranted damage caused last week to the R59 in Meyerton by service delivery protesters, who had dug a wide and deep trench right across the dual lane road, thereby placing at risk the lives of motorists.

The sad thing about what happened in Meyerton is that protesters threatened and intimidated departmental officials who were on site to repair the road.

Whilst we are mindful of the rights of residents to protest, this should be done within the confines of the law and without damage to public infrastructure.

Road projects require long-term budget planning and willful damage to the infrastructure costs millions to repair. It does not make sense that residents, in demanding improved services, recklessly and carelessly damage existing infrastructure. We, therefore, call on the communities to protest peacefully and the police to assist in protecting public infrastructure during community protests.

In this month, we will showcase the gains that have been made in extending public transport services in our province.

We will project the new Metrorail trains, the Gautrain, the Rea Vaya and A Re Yeng bus rapid transit systems and best practice within the taxi industry aimed at rendering peaceful and efficient services to commuters.

We wish to compliment the City of Tshwane for taking the bold decision yesterday to introduce A Re Yeng bus services in Mamelodi even though the infrastructure is not in place.

Many people might not be aware that the operating company for A Re Yeng is wholly owned by the taxi industry in the region. So, this is a wonderful example of the municipality and the taxi industry going the proverbial "extra mile" in service of our communities.

We have an interesting and exciting programme lined up for this month, which I will briefly highlight.

Yesterday, in partnership with the City of Tshwane, we launched a R170 million, state of the art, A Re Yeng bus depot in Pretoria. Today, we showcase improvements on the M1 freeway.

In the course of the month, we will officially open new BRT routes in the Pretoria city centre and host a rail summit with PRASA to look at safety and service delivery standards, specifically along the Vereeniging-Johannesburg corridor.

We will launch a new technological Application for travelling information and pilot the integrated e-ticket across Gautrain and BRT systems in the province.

We will be launching new and upgraded road projects in Sedibeng and host a transport

career day with high school students.

The Gautrain will organize “an amazing public transport race” between Johannesburg and Tshwane and the West Rand District will promote non-motorised transport infrastructure.

There will be a freight seminar with the industry looking at various aspects such as overloading, traffic congestion and the Tshepo One Million programme.

We will be announcing, together with the management of Lanseria Airport, a number of important infrastructure projects linked to the airport.

We will be organising a dedicated outreach programme across the five regions in our province to register and issue operating licenses to public transport operators that fall within the metered taxi category.

Finally, there will be a number of road safety activations across the province that will be conducted in partnership with the Gauteng Traffic Police and the traffic departments in municipalities.

There’s a lot more in our programme. We invite transport stakeholders and the public at large to celebrate transport month with us and assist in building a credible transport system in our province.

Let’s embark on and enjoy the 2017 October Transport Month Campaign!

ENDS!

For more information, please contact the Department of Roads and Transport Media Liaison Officer Ms Melitah Madiba on 073 644 9935 or PressOffice.gpdrts@gauteng.gov.za



Notice: GDRT is Moving

The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport (GDRT) is moving. We are relocating to a new home: **45 Commissioner Street, Marshalltown, JHB (Opp Chancellor House Rea Vaya Station).**