

18-10-2013: R2-BILLION FACELIFT FOR JOHANNESBURG ROADS

(Mayor Tau announces three year project to upgrade highways and byways)

Johannesburg will be spending almost R2-billion on the rebuilding and fixing of road infrastructure in the City to alleviate current traffic congestion, lower the cost of doing business and attract investment.

The M1 and M2 highways and the major arteries serving commercial hubs such as Sandton and Rosebank will be the major beneficiaries of this extensive transport upgrade which will take place over a three year period. The Soweto Highway will also receive a R180 million facelift.

Speaking at the launch of the construction work in Rosebank, Executive Mayor, Clr Mpho Parks Tau, said the roads project forms part of a comprehensive investment in strategic infrastructure of more than R110 billion over the next decade.

A quality road network is at the core of Johannesburg's transformation and future economic and residential growth will be concentrated along the major transport arteries or "Corridors of Freedom."

Mayor Tau said the City has recently met with business communities in the northern suburbs and listened to their concerns about the quality of roads and traffic congestion.

"We are confident that this investment will address most of the major issues raised by business and contribute to the rejuvenation of the city's premier financial and commercial districts," he said.

The bulk of the funding will go towards the comprehensive rehabilitation and resurfacing of roads. "We are aware of the public's frustration about potholes and will be spending almost R80-million on patching and fixing cracks.

However, our primary focus is the long-term rehabilitation of the road network," said Mayor Tau. "We are not chasing after potholes or looking for quick fixes."

The resurfacing project will be undertaken by the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) which is responsible for the provision of quality road infrastructure, effective traffic management, the maintenance of traffic signals and road signs and the upkeep of the storm water system.

Mayor Tau said the City is completing a Visual Condition Assessment (VCA) of Johannesburg's entire road network. This shows that the percentage of road surface considered to be "poor to very poor" has grown from 20% in 2008 to 30% in 2013.

The City intends to reduce this to 10% by 2023. Road resurfacing is undertaken to preserve the existing "good and fair roads" while more comprehensive reconstruction is required to improve the roads that are in poor condition.

Johannesburg is committed to the "complete street" utilisation of the public road network. The rehabilitation of roads will also make provision for pedestrian traffic and cycle lanes on the major

arteries – including the highway network.

“Although we are improving road surfaces the City’s long term objective is to move away from the over-reliance on the private vehicle,” says Mayor Tau. The Corridors of Freedom provides for the extension of public transport – Rea Vaya, Metrobus and passenger rail – across the City and the promotion of non-motorised transport through bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways.

The development nodes along the corridors will create economic activities and bring people’s living spaces closer to their work place and shopping opportunities – thus reducing the demand for private travel.

The first phase of the resurfacing programme will result in the upgrading of more than 435 km of road across all seven regions of the City during the current financial year.

The M1 resurfacing is undertaken in partnership with Sanral. In 2013/14 the primary focus is on the double-decker bridge sections of the north-south artery. R300 million has been allocated for this project over a period of three years.

Work on the M2 and the Soweto Highway will commence in 2013 /14. The three year costs for the M2 are estimated at R230 million and for the Soweto Highway at R180 million.

More than R1 billion has been set aside for the resurfacing of city and suburban roads in the seven regions. Among the roads that will receive priority attention are Jan Smuts, Louis Botha, Turffontein, Sturdee, Wilgerood and Nasrec Road.

Mayor Tau said the reconstruction will support economic growth and development by reducing traffic congestion, cutting down on travel time and facilitating the movement of people, goods and services.

Construction projects will, unfortunately, result in short-term inconvenience to motorists, residents and the business community. The City will, however, attempt to keep disruptions to a minimum, step up traffic management and provide for alternative routes while the work is taking place.

“I call on Joburgers and visitors to our city to be patient, remain courteous and obey traffic signals during this short period of disruption,” said Mayor Tau.

“The long-term benefits of a world-class highway and suburban road network will far outweigh the temporary inconvenience during the construction phase,” he said.

ENDS.