

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MAYOR ON THE SUSPENSION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

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I am deployed by the African National Congress (ANC), and its Alliance partners, the SACP, COSATU and SANCO, to local government. Furthermore, I am specifically deployed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC as the Executive Mayor of South Africa's 6th largest city, Nelson Mandela Bay.

The mandate of the ANC, and thus the mandate by which I am deployed, is to ensure a better life for all. The ANC and its deployees, with this mandate of the people, has prioritised service delivery and infrastructure development, areas which were grossly neglected by our Apartheid predecessors, especially in black areas.

One of the major infrastructural omissions during Apartheid South Africa, and one that continues to place us at a particular disadvantage with the rest of the world, is the lack of a proper public transport system that is reliable, affordable and safe.

Most South Africans do not have the luxury of owning private vehicles, and the working class are solely reliant on public transport to commute to and from work, to visit friends and relatives, to attend weddings, funerals and family functions, to get to and from church and places of worship.

The ANC government has therefore identified public transport as a key developmental priority, and in this respect, all three spheres of governance, National, Provincial and Local, have worked tirelessly to make this a reality, **using the 2010 FIFA World Cup as a catalyst for the first phase of the delivery of an affordable, efficient, reliable and safe public transport system.**

Whilst National and Provincial government have provided overall direction and funding for the initial phases of the system, including the required infrastructure and operations, local government is tasked with its implementation and operationalisation. The same model of funding and operationalisation has been applied to a host of major cities, including Joburg, Tshwane and of course Nelson Mandela Bay.

To this end, local government was required to submit plans for their respective public transport systems to the Department of Transport (DoT). In keeping with the vision and goal of delivering a lasting legacy of an affordable, reliable and safe public transport system, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality after having (a) **conducted best practice international research**, (b) consulted, engaged and collaborated with local stakeholders, and (c) taken into account the present modes of public transport being used by commuters, developed an Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network (IRPTN) - or Public Transport Plan (PTP), if you like.

The Plan includes the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, minibus taxis, regular buses and private transport operators. All these modes of transport will work in an integrated network so that the commuter has ready and easy access to public transport that is safe, reliable, efficient and affordable.

The first step in ensuring this provision to the public, is the construction of road infrastructure. This is the present and most pressing priority, and in order for us to meet the benchmark of 2010, construction and upgrading on 7 major roads has already begun.

It must be emphasised that, irrespective of the respective modes of transport used as part of the PTP,

the construction, upgrading and improvement of our road infrastructure must take place, whether this is used for private vehicles, BRT, minibus taxis or buses - road infrastructure development, such as is taking place now, is an absolute imperative.

The African National Congress is delivering. The road construction and upgrading is delivery - ANC delivery, enacted through its employees in government.

And this is why I am both surprised and perplexed as to how and why the ANC's Alliance partners would want to suspend the delivery of infrastructure and services to the people.

Nelson Mandela Bay, just like many South African cities, is in dire need of major road infrastructure. In terms of the eventual operational system that is employed we have developed a draft business plan, and we are more than happy and open to discuss these details with the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the system. This was and is the very basis upon which we developed the plans in the first place.

But whilst we agree to discuss the operational details, which have not been finalised yet, we simply cannot stop the road construction - it would be nothing more than stifling infrastructure development and service delivery.

That is not to mention the other unthinkable implications it would have:

In terms of the road construction and upgrading, as mentioned 9 contracts have been awarded, 7 of which are under way and 2 of which await RoDs (Records of Decision).

Should we issue an instruction to the contractors to suspend the construction for just one (1) month, the NMBM will be liable for R25 million in fruitless or wasteful expenditure. In terms of the MFMA, the person or persons who was/were responsible for such instruction will be held liable for this amount.

The contractors and the NMBM are bound by a legal contract. Suspending the construction would render the NMBM in breach of the contract.

And, as stated, suspending the construction would have a ripple effect on the rest of the delivery associated with the provision of an efficient, safe, reliable and affordable public transport system to the people of Nelson Mandela Bay and our visitors.

My appeal to all our residents and stakeholders is not to take this suppression of delivery lying down. Your government, the one which promised you a better life, is delivering. Do not allow this delivery to be suspended.

A few persons with political agendas have been issuing public statements about the Municipality's plans. Do not allow yourselves to become confused by such misleading statements - your government is delivering an efficient, affordable, safe and reliable public transport system, and transport infrastructure. No amount of politicking can negate this delivery.

As long as I, Nondumiso Maphazi, am your Mayor, deployed by the ANC, service delivery and infrastructure development to ensure a better life for all, shall be my priority. And the road infrastructure construction and Public Transport Plan is part of that better life.

I thank you.

CLLR NONDUMISO MAPHAZI
EXECUTIVE MAYOR
NELSON MANDELA BAY