



GAUTENG PROVINCE
ROADS AND TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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To: All Media

Attn: News Editors / Transport Reporters

Gauteng sets aside capacity to address illegal occupation of road reserves

The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport has introduced a new programme to address illegal occupation of road reserves which ends up impeding on the efficient delivery of infrastructure.

The Provincial Road Reserve Clearing Programme, an integral part of the Transport Infrastructure Compliance Office, has been introduced to fast-track the delivery of transport infrastructure.

MEC for Public Transport and Roads Infrastructure Jacob Mamabolo expressed his concern on how illegal occupation of road reserves negatively impacts the Department's progress in the construction of strategic roads to support economic recovery and activity.

"We are deeply concerned about the impact of illegal occupation of our road reserves as they delay road construction projects. This has necessitated a programme to preserve and protect these to facilitate economic growth through Smart Mobility of people and goods."

"Road construction projects have been delayed and contracts cancelled due to illegal road encroachments. This results in delays to the implementation of priority projects critical to economic development that augments Smart Mobility. Therefore, we need to ensure that road reserves are protected and cleared for current and future construction projects. We are exploring various avenues available to us to ensure those who have illegally occupied the road reserves are removed in the most humane and legal manner," said Mamabolo.

As part of efforts to address the encroachment issue, the MEC outlined a 10-points intervention plan as follows:

- 1)** The Department will engage widely and extensively with affected stakeholders and communities to highlight the issue of illegal occupation and how it impacts the delivery of road infrastructure.
- 2)** The relocation of communities occupying the road reserves will be done in a humane way, within a proper legal framework and in full compliance with the law taking into account the needs and legit expectations of the vulnerable communities.

- 3) 3.The Department will undertake a province-wide community awareness to educate the negative impact of illegal occupations on road construction projects.
- 4) The Department, through engagements with affected stakeholders, will prioritise the relocation of communities or businesses occupying road reserves meant for roads construction projects with the potential to unlock multi-billion investments required to grow the economy and create the much-needed jobs.
- 5) The Department will leverage on smart technology such as the use of drone and satellite images to monitor and get real time information about current and future road encroachments.
- 6) The Department will ensure that the Transport Infrastructure Readiness Matrix is complied with before new roads construction projects commence. The Readiness Matrix is a digital platform that assesses the project pipeline and the ability of projects to be implemented. It lays out a transparent, step by step project delivery steps from the inception of the project until the close out and handover of the projects.
- 7) As road reserve encroachments mostly affect construction of new roads (green projects), securing and protecting land for future construction projects will be prioritised to ensure no one occupies areas meant for development.
- 8) The Department will strengthen its partnership with critical research institutions such as the University of Pretoria and the Council for Scientific Research and Industrial Research (CSIR) to assist in promoting efficient and effective mobility of goods and services in the province through the deployment of related technology and data.
- 9) The Department will also strengthen intergovernmental relations with institutions such as municipalities. Municipalities are expected to enforce municipal bylaws and to not approve township establishments that encroach on the road reserves.
- 10) Access to information on proclaimed and gazetted road reserves especially on new roads will be publicly published.

Ends!

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Roads & Transport

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