

**SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE LAUNCH OF THE DRAFT 25-YEAR INTEGRATED
TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN FOR GAUTENG**

(BIRCHWOOD CONFERENCE CENTRE)

19 AUGUST 2013

My Colleagues - Members of Mayoral Committees for Transport

Members of the ITMP25 Steering Committee and the 2037 Consortium

Officials from all spheres of government

Members of the media

Distinguished guests

Thank you for attending the launch of the 25-Year Integrated Transport Master Plan (ITMP25) for Gauteng and a warm welcome to all of you. I want to begin by reciting a beautifully crafted poem by the celebrated African poet, Ben Okri, entitled, *The Awakening Age*:

O ye who travel the meridian line,
May the vision of a new world within you shine.

May eyes that have lived with poverty's rage,
See through to the glory of the awakening age.

For we are all richly linked in hope,
Woven in history, like a mountain rope.

Together we can ascend to a new height,
Guided by our heart's clearest light.

When perceptions are changed there's much to gain,
A flowering of truth instead of pain.

There's more to a people than their poverty;
There's their work, wisdom, and creativity.

Along the line may our lives rhyme,
To make a loving harvest of space and time.

That's really what today is about; it's about seeing beyond the grim transport challenges of the present moment; it's about hope; about creating a new vision for an integrated transport system, and of working together to change the perceptions of the future of this system. It's about our collective work, wisdom and creativity to make a loving harvest of space and time for future generations. It's about the ITMP25!

BACKGROUND

Let us for a moment take one step back. On the 6 June 2011, we had appointed a Steering Committee of transport planning experts, academics and specialists to develop a medium term transport plan for Gauteng. Its brief was to formulate a sustainable plan that will promote Gauteng as the economic powerhouse of Southern Africa; stimulate sustainable economic growth; promote skills development and create employment. In addition, the Committee was tasked to present a short-term, five year intervention plan to address the immediate challenges confronting the transport system in the province. Notwithstanding the slight delays in the tabling of these reports, we are satisfied that the Steering Committee has discharged its responsibilities proficiently and adeptly, for which we express our sincere appreciation. In June last year, we received the 5-Year Gauteng Transport Implementation Plan (GTIP5) and today we have a copy of the draft ITMP25 in our hands.

I don't know how many of you present here are going to be around with me in 25 years from now when hopefully the major elements of this plan would have been implemented synergistically in the Gauteng City Region (GCR). That day, when we have ascended to a new height, we shall see the glory of the age awakened. Today, we take the first historic step in that direction.

THE ITMP25

At its core the ITMP25 is more than a transport plan. Building on the GTIP5, it sets out a strategic framework to better the lives of Gauteng residents and position our province as a great place in which to live; an attractive destination for investment and tourism. It proposes

a radical paradigm shift in spatial and transport planning. It serves as a point of departure from apartheid spatial planning, land use and mobility patterns, and ushers in an innovative way of structuring our future societal development.

The plan is underpinned by founding principles such as economic beneficiation; doing things in a “smart” and sustainable manner; and integrating transport networks, modes and services. Our new, attractively-designed transport logo and slogan, *Gauteng on the move*, captures the spirit and essence of this new paradigm.

Essentially, the plan proposes eight key interventions, namely, subsidised housing provision dissimilar to the current, single dwellings on stands within urban core areas; land use densification in support of public transport; reinforcing the passenger rail network as the backbone of the system; extending the integrated rapid and road-based public transport networks; strengthening freight hubs; ensuring effective travel demand management; mainstreaming non-motorised transport; and, ensuring continued provincial wide mobility. These recommendations are based on the demographic and economic projections, and transport modelling linked to years 2025 and 2037.

A future transport system requires that Gauteng residents adopt a shift in transport modes from:

- ✓ motorised to non-motorised trips;
- ✓ private to public transport; and
- ✓ from road to rail.

We will have to become more conscious of our environment; use cleaner fuels or alternatives such as compressed natural gas or electricity to power our cars, taxis, buses and trucks; and use transport technology intelligently. Although we might not like it, we will have to reduce traffic congestion through stronger travel demand management measures. Walking and cycling must be the preferred modes for short distances; followed by rail, bus and mini-bus taxis for longer distances, and yes, there is a place in the sun for motorbikes, tuks-tuks and pedi-cabs. Private vehicle use for daily commuting to work and home must become the least favoured option as the public transport system is expanded and integrated. We will have to regulate our airfields and there will be a need for another

intercontinental airport after the 25-year timeframe has lapsed. A well-developed freight and logistics “ring” will have to be created on the periphery of the core urban areas in the province and a properly structured Transport Authority should be established to better plan, co-ordinate and expand the future transport system. Funding for transport will have to increase fourfold over this period if we are to accomplish all that is envisioned in the plan.

THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

There is a real threat to our future if we continue on our existing path. The situation will be even more threatening when we become comfortable with and used to the current transport realities. We cannot be like the man who went to a fortune teller to hear what she had to say about his future. She looked into a crystal ball and said, “You will be poor and unhappy until you are forty-five years old.” “Then what will happen?” asked the man hopefully. “Then you’ll get used to it.” If we opt to do nothing now - and in the foreseeable future - the Gauteng residents will live through the nightmarish scenario of unparalleled traffic gridlocks. Peak hour traffic would be slower than the horse-cart, which long served as the mode of transport before the birth of the automobile. We will find ourselves in a classic situation where we believe that ‘our future lies in the past’. So, to do nothing is not an option at all.

A CALL TO ACTION

This plan is a clarion call to action to all segments of the transport fraternity. All of us – departmental and municipal officials; rail, bus and taxi operators; bikers and cyclists; planners and consultants; engineers, construction workers and environmentalists; big and small business enterprises; men and women; able-bodied and physically challenged individuals; young and old – must throw our collective weight and energy behind the plan once it is consulted upon, finalised and approved. Government and the private sector must generate the funds to bring the plan to fruition. Our visionary outlook and daring spirit must result in a clearly defined road map for a new and integrated transport system.

This plan must guide our future planning and day-to-day operations, particularly in the area of transport, land use, human resource development and socio-economic development.

If we play our part future generations will look at our contributions with a sense of appreciation and gratitude. We would be seen as a proactive and responsive citizenry doing our best for the next generation.

The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport has the will to make the ITMP25 an integral part of our vision and operational plans. It is committed to making the necessary governance and institutional arrangements to ensure that the ITMP25, once approved, is implemented in a co-ordinated, co-operative and synergistic manner.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Multi-stakeholder engagement, consultation, endorsement, and co-operative decision-making across the tiers of government and its agencies, would be the key driver for the implementation of the ITMP25. Unless our co-operation and co-ordination across the three tiers of government become seamless, the implementation of proposed interventions would be achievable, and it would remain a mere plan on paper. Hence, the ITMP25 works on the premise that co-operative, co-ordinated and collective decision-making would be in place as the key determinants to deliver on its proposed interventions. What the ITMP25 calls for is a culture of integrated and joint planning, decision-making and co-operative governance in areas where such linkages are inevitable and symbiotic.

It would be foolish to believe that this plan would be the last word on all that needs to be said on transport, land use and sustainable mobility. But it does mark an important beginning. I commend it to the general public and, more specifically, to transport stakeholders who are here today for consideration and comment. Such comment should reach the Department of Roads and Transport by 20 September 2013.

As we engage further with stakeholders more information and insights would be generated, which would become part of this great body of knowledge in the transport sector. On this score I am delighted that the Steering Committee has compiled a more concise and popular version of the plan, which hopefully would create wider public interest in the proposals. The general public is not specifically part of transport planning, but their lives are impacted on heavily by the decisions taken by transport planners and officials. Therefore, their voices, inputs and concerns should shape the ITMP25.

APPRECIATION

I would like to thank the Chairperson, Mr Jack van der Merwe, Members of Steering Committee and the Consortium 2037 for their dedication and commitment to deliver on this task against tight deadlines. The consistent support from the Premier, Ms Nomvula Mokonyane; my colleagues in the Executive Council; the Transport Members of the Mayoral Committees and officials in the respective municipalities; the Gauteng Planning Commission, and officials in the Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport, is acknowledged with sincere appreciation. My special thanks must go to the technical personnel from ACSA, PRASA, SANRAL and Transnet, who co-operated fully with the Consortium 2037 researchers and made available their strategic research and plans for the future. Last, but not least, I would like to thank all the stakeholders who made their inputs, particular for the GTIP5, without whose contributions the ITMP25 would have been incomplete.

CONCLUSION

By putting together the ITMP25 as our collective reflections we have taken our destiny into our own hands. In a nutshell then, the ITMP25 seeks to transform the urban landscape; unlock our economic potential, and leverage transport as an enabler to drive socio-economic growth and development. It presents solutions to our transport challenges and the related areas impacting on our lives such as land use patterns; public transport; job creation; freight movement; non-motorized transport; aviation; roads construction; “green” transport; intelligent transport systems, and social cohesion. Its vision is to achieve an integrated and efficient transport system that promotes sustainable economic growth, skills development and job creation; fosters quality of life; socially includes all communities, and preserves the environment.

Ismail Vadi

MEC for Roads and Transport