



GAUTENG PROVINCE

ROADS AND TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH

Tabling of Annual Reports in Gauteng Provincial Legislature Speech

30 August 2016

Madam Speaker

It is my pleasure to table the 2015/16 Annual Reports for the Department of Roads and Transport, the Gautrain Management Agency (GMA) and g-Fleet. These Reports capture the progress of the Department's funded programmes, the predetermined targets achieved, and the challenges faced and dealt with, in partnership with a range of transport stakeholders.

We are pleased the GMA has maintained a clean audit; the Department has an unqualified audit with a reduced number of concerns by the Office of the Auditor-General. A highlight of the Annual Report is the sterling effort made by the new management of gFleet to significantly improve the audit opinion on the entity. Now we can state with a degree of certainty that the financial statements accurately reflect the financial health of the entity. This has been a steep climb for gFleet and we wish to reassure the House that we are committed to strengthening its managerial capacity so that it stands out as a well-managed and effective trading entity.

The reality about Roads and Transport is that it is future-oriented. If we're planning for what we have, we're behind the curve. Therefore, the 25-Year Integrated Transport Master Plan (ITMP25) directs us to plan for the future. Gauteng's future would be very different from what it is now, particularly in the light of the increased projections in population and vehicles, the growth of the workforce and the emergence of mega cities.

Only last week, the Statistician-General reported that Gauteng remains the province with the largest population in the country and that our population has increased to 13.5 million residents. We have to plan for such growth. The ANC-led provincial government is clear that in the current economic climate, growth should be premised on an infrastructure-led strategy, which includes making substantial investments in roads and public transport. Our investments in transport infrastructure will contribute to economic growth and development of our province, particularly at a time when the global and local economy are experiencing a downturn.

The National Development Plan highlights the need for us to protect our assets. Therefore, the Department has in place a proactive plan to ensure that the provincial road network is maintained and upgraded to support social and economic mobility as well as road safety. Partnerships between government and private property developers will continue to give traction to the building of new roads in the five development corridors. Such partnerships foster alignment and harmonisation of land use and transport, and allow for integrated development that improves the lives of ordinary people.

The provision of reliable, affordable and safe public transport remains the major challenge facing both provincial and local governments. The demand for subsidised public transport will escalate due to in-migration and the economic downturn. Therefore, the goal of delivering reliable, accessible, safe and affordable public transport to commuters will remain a top priority of the provincial government.

The initiative to procure new rolling stock for Gautrain to meet rising passenger demand over the next decade is aimed at making rail the backbone of public transport in the Gauteng city-region. Similarly, the completion of the Feasibility Study into the expansion of the Gauteng Rapid Rail Network will provide greater certainty about the future growth of the rail network in our province.

Our vision is to evolve an integrated and reliable public transport system for the Gauteng city-region that operates as a single, functional transport area, where the users of the system are unmindful of municipal and provincial boundaries.

Recently, we publicly presented the findings of the Gauteng Household Travel Survey (2014), which was conducted in partnership with the Metropolitan and District Municipalities. The survey provides critical information for us to plan more effectively. The survey results will form part of our future planning cycle for public transport and we will take into consideration the voice of residents as part of developing an integrated public transport system in the Gauteng city-region.

One of the resolute messages that came out of the International Conference on Transport Authorities held in March this year is that the establishment of a Gauteng Transport Authority will give us optimal leverage of our limited human and fiscal resources; promote better integration and co-ordination of dispersed public transport related activities; allow for greater efficiencies in contracting transport services, and improve on transport planning.

The recently signed Declaration of Intent by Premier Makhura and the Executive Mayors of all municipalities in our province was a clear signal that our province had taken a firm decision on the establishment of a Transport Authority. This is a far sighted initiative that in the coming years will transform the way in which public transport is organised, managed and rendered to residents. We will continue with our efforts to establish and develop such an authority in the Gauteng city-region.

We are committed as a Department to ensure that our officials work with integrity to inspire public confidence and to render the kind of services expected of us as public servants. Accountability, transparency and responsible use of public resources should be the hallmarks of our administration.

The Public Service Commission in its 2015/16 oversight report of the Department has commended it for the progress made in ensuring that we entrench constitutional values and principles in our operational environment. In this regard, the Open Tender system will continue to be used for the procurement of all major projects in the Department. Payments to suppliers will be made within 30 days, if not earlier. Our frontline services must be more customer oriented, particularly at the transport licensing centres. And community concerns will be addressed within the available resources.

I would like to thank the Head of Department, Mr Ronald Swartz, the CEO of the GMA, Mr Jack van der Merwe, the Acting CEO of gFleeT, Ms Noxolo Maninjwa, and the rest of the management and staff of the Department and our Entities for their hard work and dedication. My thanks and appreciation to Chairperson Jacob Khawe and members of the Portfolio Committee.

I hereby table the Annual Reports of the Department of Roads and Transport for consideration by the House.

Ismail Vadi

Gauteng MEC for Roads and Transport

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