

BRT expansion

03 May 2010

Speech by the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, Clr Amos Masondo, at the launch of expansion of the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system at Gauteng Legislature, Inner City – Johannesburg

Programme Director

Speaker of Council: Clr Nkele Ntingane

Chief Whip of Council: Clr Nonceba Molwele

MMC for Transportation: Clr Rehana Moosajee

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

City Manager: Mr Mavela Dlamini

Managers and Officials of Council

The SACP, COSATU and SANCO

Leaders of Civil Society Organisations

Members of the BRT Steering Committee

Leaders from the Taxi and Bus Industry

Leaders of Commuter Organisations

Representatives of organisations for people with disabilities

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, today we gather here to mark another significant milestone in the roll out of the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit project.

As we meet here, we salute the spirit of the men and women in this great City, who despite adversity, threats to their personal safety and ongoing harassment, join us in seeking to forge ahead with this transformational project, of which its effect will be felt by many generations to come.

Programme Director, our excitement today is tampered by sadness, for the senseless acts of violence unleashed on two Rea Vaya buses on Friday night, which resulted in eight (8) commuters being injured and the death of Phulani Maisela.

On behalf of Council and the citizens and residents of Johannesburg I would like to extend our condolences to the Maisela family, we will not allow his death to be in vain. South Africans are a courageous nation and we will not be held to ransom by those who refuse to embrace development and building a society that is forward looking.

Programme Director, we will implore the law enforcement agencies to bring the perpetrators of these cowardly acts to book so that they can face the full might of the law. We say to them today, we will not be intimidated to abandon our mandate to serve the people and work with them to build a better life. Let the spirit of Phumulani live forever.

Programme Director, today we have seen passengers embarking and disembarking on the Rea Vaya buses. When we watch them do this, it seems so easy. Yet behind these easy steps of buying a ticket, validating the ticket, climbing on the bus lies enormous amounts of planning, designing, constructing, training and energy and passion. I salute the men and women behind this very complex infrastructural and logistical accomplishment!

I will also like to say that this project is much more than people getting on and off this world class buses and through world class stations. It is a project which is about catalyzing change and transformation.

This Rea Vaya project is a catalyst for public transport transformation. The Rea Vaya BRT has set a new standard for public transport in Johannesburg and in the rest of South Africa. It is a signal that the government is committed to and can deliver quality public transport. That it respects commuters and that investing in public transport is a critical part of service delivery.

Rea Vaya is Africa's first mass rapid public transport system and we, the people of Johannesburg have been true to the pioneering roots of our World-Class African City.

This project is a catalyst for Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) amongst the taxi industry. We remain committed to ensure through an intensive negotiation process that the shareholders of the Bus Operating Company must be the taxi owners who were previously running their taxis on these routes. We want to see taxi owners become proud and skilled bus company owners.

This project is a catalyst for land use transformation. Apartheid divided our City. Rea Vaya is bringing the Inner City, Soweto, Eldorado Park and next year Westbury, Newclare, Auckland Park and Hillbrow close together. The Rea Vaya routes and stations are creating corridors and nodes around which economic and residential development is happening.

This project is a catalyst for environmental change and air quality improvement. Rea Vaya is Africa's largest Green project around environmental sustainability. We are moving our people in a manner that does not do harm to the environment. Congestion and significant private car use is a big driver of poor air quality and high carbon emissions. Something our world can no longer afford. The more people use environmentally safe public transport such as Rea Vaya, the better for Mother Earth.

Programme Director, this project is a catalyst for a change in attitudes. We are making public transport attractive to encourage car users to leave their cars and their prejudices about public transport at home. The Rea Vaya project has also embraced the transport values of accountability, honesty respect, co-operation and ubuntu.

I hope that all of you who use Rea Vaya will see those values in the actions of the station ambassadors, bus drivers, security and cleaners. I hope that you will also adopt these values when you use our world class African bus service.

Lastly, Rea Vaya BRT is a legacy project. Together with Soccer City, the Rea Vaya BRT is the largest legacy project of the 2010 Soccer World Cup

Together with other modes of transport, Rea Vaya will be contributing to move spectators in and out of the stadium smoothly and speedily. We will also try to minimise traffic congestion around our stadiums.

In less than forty (40) days, Rea Vaya will be used to transport spectators to the matches. And because of this, over the next forty (40) years the residents of Joburg will be able to use this bus service to work, to school and to more soccer games. I hope, Programme Director, that Bafana Bafana supporters are going to be riding home cheering because their team has won yet another game!

When our visitors leave for home, I hope that they will also be taking memories of the Rea Vaya with them and it will contribute to the stories that they will tell about our glorious Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa and Africa. This is what makes Rea Vaya a legacy project.

Thank you for coming to celebrate this day with us.

Rea Vaya. Safe, Reliable. Affordable.

Rea Vaya. We are going.

Viva Rea Vaya Viva