

The official opening of the BRT prototype station

04 November 2008

Statement by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Clr Amos Masondo, on the occasion of the official opening of the BRT prototype station, Joubert Park - Johannesburg

Programme Director

Minister of Transport: Jeff Radebe

MEC for Transport, Public Works and Roads: Ignatius Jacobs

Speaker of Council: Clr Nkele Ntingane

Chief Whip of Council: Clr Bafana Sithole

MMC for Transport: Clr Rehana Moosajee

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Chairpersons of Section 79 Committees

Fellow Councillors

City Manager: Mavela Dlamini

Head of BRT Project: Bob Stanway

Managers and Officials of Council

Representatives of the Taxi Industry

- \* Top Six: Mr Mtambo and Mr S'celo Mabaso

- \* The Greater Johannesburg Regional Taxi Council: Eric Motshwane

Representatives of the Bus Industry

- \* Putco: Mr Pisapia

- \* Head of Metro Bus: Mr Van Laar

- \* Chairman of Metro Bus Board: Vincent Mtambo

SACO (commuters): Mr Sangweni

Officials and Managers

Distinguished Guests

Inner City Community

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, let me begin by expressing appreciation for this opportunity to say a few words at this important occasion - the opening of the first Bus Rapid Transit (Rea Vaya) prototype station.

This is indeed an historic day. We are witnessing the first prototype station, a visible milestone in the implementation of the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit system.

Rea Vaya is a system that will revolutionise public transport in and around Johannesburg and will bring fast, efficient, secure, affordable and environmentally-friendly transport to the people of our City - a world-class public transport system for a world-class African City!

One cannot imagine that the streets of Johannesburg were once filled with animal-drawn carts, then trams. Today this City is jam-packed with cars, trucks, buses and minibus taxis.

Programme Director, in the next few years our City will be unrecognisable from a transport perspective when new freeways, rapid rail and bus systems are complete. At that time we would have upgraded modern transport networks and there will be far less congestion on our roads.

Rea Vaya is moving forward very fast. In about six months, Phase 1A will be complete in time for the Confederations Cup in June 2009. The City of Johannesburg will have 143 new buses running, a single operator, a smart card system for commuters and 20 of these state-of-the art bus stations we are seeing today.

When the entire Phase 1 network is complete, Rea Vaya will cover more than 122kms of trunk routes across the City, with feeder and complementary buses integrated into the system. There will be about 150 stations, positioned half a kilometre apart, with buses running every three minutes in peak times and every ten minutes in off-peak times and it will be possible to catch a bus from 5am to 12 midnight.

The BRT Station implementation programme commenced with an intense public participation phase in 2007, and through the involvement of a number of working groups, the "look and feel" of Johannesburg's BRT Stations evolved into what was ultimately approved by Council for design and implementation.

The City's BRT Stations are designed to be naturally ventilated, insulated from heat and cold, are of lightweight construction, and are visually and aesthetically appealing.

All BRT Stations on the BRT Trunk network will be identical. There are, however, a number of different configurations of station layout:

- \* "back to back" stations;
- \* "staggered stations"; and
- \* "offset staggered" stations.

The reason for having different configurations is to be able to accommodate the BRT operation within space constraints of a particular station site.

There are also various lengths of station:

- \* Single;
- \* double;
- \* and triple station modules.

Programme Director, this BRT Station here, at Joubert Park, "the Prototype," is a single module, "back to back" station, which is one half of the final required "double module".

The Joburg BRT stations are essentially constructed from concrete, steel and glass, and there were designed in an innovative manner in order to be cost effective, and to enable "fast track" construction.

BRT Stations are designed in "modular units" with the purpose to accommodate construction of the numerous station configurations. There are two standardised platform "modular" widths- 4.8 m and 3.3 m. The "modular" approach is cost effective and enables ease of construction and fast tracking. All BRT stations are designed with people living with disabilities in mind, which form an integral large part of the station design, and which dictated many of the design parameters.

Programme Director, please let me share some of the BRT stations aspects that are worth knowing:

- \* Intelligence Transportation System (ITS) requirements within the station buildings are designed as "plug and play" (meaning that they can easily be mantled and becomes operational immediately) modules for ease of construction.
  - \* Construction of this station took approximately eight weeks.
  - \* Stations will have provision of 6 hour battery backup power supply.
- Estimated power consumption at a typical BRT Station will be in the order of 8, 5 kW.
- \* Standardised landscaping, aesthetics, paving and street furniture will be the same at all Station Nodes.
  - \* Stations have water, electricity supply and waste water connections to the City' infrastructure, which are individually metered.
  - \* Stations comply with fire regulations.
  - \* Stations have electronically operated doors which are opened via remote control from the BRT buses.
  - \* A typical "back to back", "single module" station costs in the region of R10 million to construct, which includes the street furniture, street lighting, paving around the station, signage as well as the building itself.

A basic station will have features such as ticket machines, pedestrian crosswalks for commuters to get to the stations, weather cover, real-time information displays, and a platform providing a wheelchair friendly interface. Larger stations will also have drop-off zones, bicycle parking zones, metred taxi ranks and information kiosks.

Constructing the first bus station on site gives us the opportunity to test its operation, to detect and iron out any potential problems before commencing final construction on the remainder of the stations. The test will not be done by the City alone; it will include members of the public as well. Representatives from People Living with Disabilities, for example, will test this station and provide us with valuable feedback on its user-friendliness.

Rea Vaya's infrastructure, including the bus stations and dedicated bus lanes, is taking shape - it is now visible for most of us to see.

Construction workers are working round-the-clock and on weekends. This would not be possible without our partners.

Please be assured of the fact that the City of Johannesburg has the highest appreciation of the crucial role that the bus and taxi industry have played

in the provision of public transport in the past and that we want to continue to deepen this relationship as we move into the future.

Programme Director, I am convinced that Rea Vaya BRT will open up a wealth of new opportunities in the public transport sector for all participants, big or small, in which both the bus and taxi industry, have been, and will remain important players.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MMC for Transport, Rehana Moosajee, the BRT team and every worker contributing to the successful delivery of this system for their dedication and hard work.

I would also like to thank the representatives of the Bus and Taxi Industry for their constructive participation in the process that resulted in the launch of this station.

In conclusion, Programme Director, I would like to ask residents, citizens and other road users to be patient with congestion and deviations on roads, as the inconvenience will be worth their while once the whole project is complete.

Rea Vaya - We are Going!

Thank you