

## **Speech by the Executive Mayor Alderman Dan Plato: Council meeting of 27 January 2010**

Speaker, I would like to welcome all Councillors, City Officials and members of the public. I hope that you are all rested and ready for what promises to be very exciting and challenging year.

Firstly, I would like to commend the entire Safety and Security Directorate under the very capable leadership of Cllr JP Smith and Richard Bosman. Your success over the Festive Season shows the impact of good team work.

Cape Town went all out in its planning this Festive Season to ensure a safer holiday period for its residents and visitors. This did indeed pay off. The City issued more than 65 000 fines for traffic violations, confiscated alcohol valued at R91 000, responded to more than 4000 calls, assisted with Fire and Rescue operations and reunited many missing children with their parents.

All spheres of the directorate worked 12 hour shifts every day throughout this period to ensure order and enhance the safety of our people, thereby making a holiday in Cape Town and its environs all the more memorable for everyone.

Cape Town Traffic Services implemented several enforcement programmes during the festive season, most notably an integrated taxi operation, targeting driving violations across the city. More than 2 000 fines were issued for taxi-related offences.

The City, in conjunction with the Provincial Government, also participated in the *Safely Home* programme which focused on the roadworthiness of public transport vehicles before passengers boarded for long distance trips. Traffic Services were also successful in ensuring that all large events occurring in the city during the holiday period ran smoothly.

Fire and Rescue Services prepared for the busy festive season by deploying 45 new recruits on 11 December. In total, 114 seasonal fire fighters were trained and deployed from 08 December to assist with fire prevention across the city and to respond to vegetation fires.

The Festive Season Committee, under the direction of Richard Bosman, will continue working until the end of the FIFA Soccer World Cup tournament and the winter planning committee will begin work on 01 February to ensure that we are prepared and ready for the coming winter.

As part of our review of the Festive Season, we are establishing a Minstrels Sub-committee. This is a significant advance in resolving the challenges faced by the City of Cape Town in managing this important event effectively.

I would like, once again, to take this opportunity to thank the Festive Season team for their dedication and commend them for their exemplary work during this demanding time.

Speaker, the first test event at our new Cape Town Stadium was not only an historic event, but also a wonderful experience. The crowds were not simply enthusiastic in their support for Ajax and Santos, but also curious and overwhelmed by the beauty, scale and splendour of their new stadium. With Table Mountain providing the backdrop, the opening event at our new stadium was a proud moment for all who make Cape Town their home. I am pleased to report there were no major problems or incidents.

Both teams were impressed by the stadium, the quality of the pitch and greatly appreciated the crowd's support. Players and coaches with international experience compared the Cape Town Stadium favorably with world-class stadia elsewhere. What enhanced the experience for them was the close proximity of the spectators to the pitch and the extent to which this contributed to the big match atmosphere. They cited this as a distinctive and extremely positive feature, confirming the stadium's status as a world-class venue of which we can all be proud.

Of course there are things we need to improve on. The security, transport, communication and operations teams are all de-briefing in detail. That is the very purpose of the test events - to iron out difficulties ahead of the World Cup and ensure that we host world class events at the stadium.

The second test event for 40 000 spectators is a rugby match between the Stormers and Boland with *Celebrity Tens* as a curtain-raiser. Tickets for the second test event on 06 February have already been sold out.

Two sold out events within two weeks of each other is an encouraging vote of confidence and an early vindication of the risks we have taken, our belief that we could meet tight deadlines, the investment we have made, the skills and dedication of the team we assembled and the incredibly hard work of everyone involved. It augurs well for the future, but we are not complacent.

Above all I would like to say, thank you Cape Town. You made us proud. You have taken your new stadium to heart and made it your own. And you have every reason to be proud of it.

Speaker, construction work on the road infrastructure for the Integrated Rapid Transit (IRT) system has resumed after the December builders' holiday and is progressing well. The progress being made on the station infrastructure, in particular, is noteworthy.

The Granger Bay proto-type station will be completed at the end of February and will be our first completed IRT station. It is at this station where we are testing all the different engineering and operational facets involved to ensure that the construction of our other stations in the inner city and on the west coast is smooth and efficient. I encourage residents and councillors to drive down the newly opened Granger Bay Boulevard and to view this station and the Boulevard itself.

Our IRT station at the airport will be completed at the end of March. The airport station takes pride of place in the main plaza outside the new departures hall at the airport, and will provide visitors to our city with a speedy and affordable trip into Cape Town's CBD.

The external infrastructure for our stations at the Cape Town Stadium and at the Civic Centre will be completed at the end of April, with security cameras and gates being installed thereafter.

I was very pleased to see that almost a quarter of the spectators at the stadium's first test event on Saturday used the shuttle service. Well done to the City's Transport Department staff and our partners for the professional manner in which the shuttle service was run. It was an important trial run for the high quality shuttle service that we plan to ultimately provide through the IRT system for the stadium during the World Cup tournament and at all the future events we plan to host there. I encourage Capetonians to use the shuttle service at our next test event in 10 days time.

Progress on the City's West Coast roads is also encouraging. We reached an important milestone on Thursday, 07 January when we started construction of the IRT infrastructure on Blaauwberg Road outside the Bayside and the Pick n Pay shopping centres. The relocation of mini-bus taxis stacking on the roadway as well as the relocation of the Golden Arrow bus stops went very smoothly.

Although the relocation was necessitated by the need to start building critical IRT infrastructure that will ultimately extend this service to the communities of Dunoon, Doornbach and Mountague Gardens, the City also recognised that the situation of taxis stacking at Bayside needed to be addressed and formalised in a manner that assists commuters, but also the industry and businesses in the area. More work is required in this regard.

However, I would like to personally thank the South African Police Services led by Superintendent Hendrik Olivier, the City's Safety and Security and Transport staff and the IRT project team for their exemplary work and the successful way in which they implemented this operation, with minimal disruption to commuters and the business community in the area.

The manufacture of the 18 m articulated buses and the 12 m buses is progressing well. Inspection and approval of the first prototype vehicles is scheduled for mid- February and their delivery for February and April. The delivery of the main fleet will start during the first week of May.

The City is negotiating a lease with Transnet - with the option to purchase - of a property which will be used with adjacent municipal land, as an Inner City Bus Depot. Minor improvements to this site will be implemented once negotiations are concluded. City-owned land on the Foreshore will also be made available for the staging and parking of IRT buses.

The City has contracted a public transport operator for the second test event at Cape Town Stadium on 6 February, and has offered the existing scheduled bus and mini-bus taxi industry in the inner city an opportunity to provide the IRT component of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Spectator Transport Services. The City's IRT team is finalising contractual negotiations with a company drawn from operators in the inner city public transport sector.

The delivery of our buses, the appointment of an operator and the acquisition of our inner city bus depot will allow the City to operate the City-Airport service, a Civic Centre Stadium shuttle service, a UCT-City *park and ride* service and an inner-city circulatory service during the 2010 World Cup period. The City intends using the newly-purchased buses as soon as possible after the 2010 soccer tournament in the IRT starter service along the R27 on the West Coast.

Speaker, the allegations by the ANC Youth League that the City has violated residents' rights by not building walls around toilets in the Makhaza section of Khayelitsha, is without foundation. There has been a clear and negotiated agreement between the City and Makhaza residents ratifying this situation for almost three years.

The City of Cape Town is committed to working with communities in the provision of sustainable housing by involving them in the decision making process as far as possible. This is why the City in 2007 agreed, together with the Ward Councillor, to build more temporary - type toilets for Ward 95 than initially planned with the clear and agreed proviso that the residents would build the toilet walls themselves.

Residents of the Makhaza community made this commitment and the City - in good faith and in compliance with what had been negotiated, built the toilets without walls. The City built 1316 toilets, and 1265 were enclosed by the residents at their own cost, totalling 96% of the structures.

The concern over the toilet enclosures has never been previously raised in any of the numerous meetings held with the community to discuss service delivery issues, nor in the Subcouncil.

It may well be that in spite of the agreement certain residents cannot afford to provide the walls for the toilets. The Council has always been willing to assist this and all other informal settlement communities wherever possible. In fact, the 51 residents who have claimed that they could not afford to enclose the City-provided toilets with self-constructed walls met Council officials to see how they could be assisted.

Council offered to provide them with second-hand building materials. However, on Monday, City officials were stopped on site by members of the Ward Forum who did not want the City to provide materials to enclose the remaining toilets. The City will now supply concrete enclosures that it has in stock. Further presentations will be made at Subcouncil about future plans for the area and the potential for housing provision. The Forum is of the opinion that if Council encloses the remaining toilets it will cause division in community because most residents, in complying with the negotiated agreement have already bought building material and enclosed the toilets near their homes at their own cost.

Speaker, it is clear that the City has honored the agreement that was reached with the community. And, over and above the agreement amicably reached, it has made provision to assist indigent residents who are unable to afford enclosures.

It is most unfortunate that the ANCYL has chosen to by-pass the Subcouncil and ignore the agreements reached with the community and rush to the media and the Human Rights Commission without first seeking to resolve the issue through the relevant structures of Council.

While it is the ANCYL's right to do so, it does create the impression that they are more interested in scoring political points than helping to promote service delivery through the relevant community and civic structures.

This kind of political opportunism is unacceptable in a multi-party Council where we are mandated to work together in spite of political differences with the shared aim of ensuring improved service delivery.

Speaker, a site inspection and the subsequent remedial steps taken by the contractor have ensured that the fly problem that occurred at a school near Vaatjie farm in the Koeberg area has been significantly reduced.

These remedial steps were taken after complaints two weeks ago about flies and an unpleasant smell following the City's routine supply of treated wastewater sludge to agricultural land in the Koeberg area. The processing of sludge has been moved to an area two and half kilometres away from the school, while larvicide is now pumped directly into the sludge at the Zandvliet and Macassar wastewater treatment plants, prior to its collection for application. The City's Environmental Health Practitioners have also been monitoring the situation.

The contractor at his own expense has been spraying the school buildings each morning and evening, concentrating on the upper walls and under the eaves.

Speaker, yesterday myself and MEC Grant visited the school and assessed the situation for ourselves. Both the City and Province are committed to finding a permanent solution to this problem and to assure that it does not re-occur.

Speaker, the City has observer status on the Steering Committee of the N2 Gateway Project. The National Department of Housing and the Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing jointly manage the project with the Housing Development Agency (HDA) which is the successor in title to Thubelisha Homes.

The allocations committee, which consists of representatives of the above-mentioned spheres of government and the HDA, is chaired by the City. This committee monitors the Project's adherence to the Land Availability Agreement with regard to the allocation of dwellings.

The City is also represented on the N2 Technical Team convened by HDA. It deals with operational matters relating to the N2 Gateway Project.

The N2 Gateway Business plan for the finalisation of Phase 1 of the project was received in November 2009. The City is not indicated as a signatory to this business plan.

A comprehensive report on the impact that the finalisation of the Phase 1 of this project will have on the resources of the City is being prepared for consideration by the Mayoral Committee and Council. The potential impact of this project on City resources is wide and far reaching and if implemented and will constrain projects to which the City has already committed itself for at least the next three to five years.

Critical focus areas of already-approved City projects such as human resources, capital and operational budgets, municipal infrastructure, grant funding allocation and housing subsidy allocations would have to be reconsidered. This also requires the potential reprioritisation of other supplementary projects and will require parks and community facilities commitments to be delayed so as to give preference to the N2 Gateway Project.

Rather than a dramatic impact on the City's resources, the City believes that the completion of Phase 1 should be financed from a dedicated and ring-fenced budget provided by Provincial or National Government, rather than depleting an already-committed City budget.

I will shortly meet with the National and Provincial Ministers of Housing to discuss the City's possible participation, roles and responsibilities in the next phase of the N2 Gateway project.

At this meeting I will seek to conclude issues around the finalisation of Phase 1 of the project. The City is, however, very cautious in this regard because the project is planned and is proceeding in parallel with its formal and legally required Integrated Development Plan and budgeting processes. The City therefore has no funding allocated to the project. The project will, however, impact on the priorities of the City and the allocation of its resources if not funded from a separate source. The role of the HDA, National and Provincial land allocations, ongoing management and maintenance are all matters that urgently need to be clarified.

Speaker, this month the City of Cape Town was proud to start a program which will see thousands of its rental properties throughout the city being upgraded and refurbished. The project will start with rental units in Kewtown. This is a ground breaking project in South Africa.

Phase 1 of the project targets 7 775 Community Residential Unit rental properties in eleven project areas across Cape Town. These project areas include Kewtown, Scottsville, Scottsdene, Manenberg, Heideveld, Hanover Park, Uitsig, Woodlands, Connaught in Elsies River, The Range in Bishop Lavis and Marble Flats in Ottery.

During Phase 1 of the project, residents in these properties will benefit from basic refurbishments and upgrades.

Project funding has been approved by Province for most of the developments. Funding will be provided by National Government, and is estimated at over a billion rand for the first phase alone – this is a substantial investment and the City thanks National Government for its support and endorsement.

The project will be implemented in the various project areas as funds are received by the City. The partnership with Provincial and National Government for the upgrade of existing housing rental stock is an important one for the City, and we will work very hard to extend this co-operative relationship to other housing projects.

This major housing rental refurbishment project includes not only a comprehensive review and upgrade of Council's rental units, but also enhancing the living space surrounding the rental stock by providing fencing, planting trees, hard surfacing and parking areas. This is an important part of the City's plan to provide quality living environments for our residents and we are very excited about this important project.

Speaker, 2010 is going to be a very challenging and exhilarating year for the City of Cape Town. I would like to encourage all the Councillors and officials in the City of Cape Town to work together this year so that we can take advantage of all the opportunities at our disposal. Let's work towards making this year the legacy of our term.

Thank you.