



TRANSPORT and PUBLIC WORKS



Steady Progress made in integrated fare management pilot project

After extensive tests in a minibus taxi, the Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works is ready to install its Integrated Fare Management System (Smart card) in a Golden Arrow Bus on route in the Simon's Town/Ocean View area.

Sipho Afrika, a senior manager in the Department's Transport branch says after months of field and backroom testing the smart card system on a minibus taxi, the department is now finalising the analysis of the technical data, collected during the tests.

According to Mr. Afrika, the department is reasonably satisfied with the results thus far.

"We have had some challenges during our tests on the minibus taxi. However, we are now at the phase where in about a month's time the smart card system will be installed and tested on a Golden Arrow bus.

The smart card will be used to "preload" bus fares or clip cards for bus routes. Commuters and passengers will swipe their cards when embarking a bus, instead of paying the conventional fare or producing your clip card.

"All systems are in place for the bus tests. We have trained and provided employment to 20 ambassadors. The department employed them during

the initial field tests. Commuters in the Simon's Town/Ocean View area appear to be skeptical about our new fare system. Even minibus taxis saw our pilot vehicle as a threat. In future they will drive our public information campaigns as well as be an integral

"progress in the project shows the department's Public Transport Improvement Programme is bearing fruit."

Golden Arrow Bus Services, Vuyisile Mdoda says Golden Arrow has given its commitment to assist with the operation of the smart card pilot project on its buses operating on the Simonstown route corridor.

"The indication is that the initial results of the analysis of the technical data have vindicated our support for such a system. We are awaiting the full analysis.

However, we are confident that it will be acceptable, that is why we decided to go ahead with the installation in one of our buses," he

The Head of Department of Transport and Public Works, Thami Manyathi, says progress in the project shows the department's Public Transport Improvement Programme is bearing fruit.

According to Mr. Manyathi the system that is being tested in Simon's Town would eventually be implemented in key transport projects such as the George Mobility Strategy. "George in all likelihood will be the first project, after the Simon's Town one that will see the introduction of a

smart card system. However, as we move towards a uniform fare structure for public transport through the Improvement Programme, we will implement the system in other modes of transport and in other parts of the province." Mr. Manyathi says.



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Temporary suspension of new applications for public transport operations in western cape

The Western Cape Operating Licences Board (POLB) has suspended all new applications for public transport operations for George and the Cape Town Functional Region (Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Paarl and Grabouw).

The suspension came into effect on 23 June 2008 and will continue until 31 March 2009. The suspension came after approval granted by the MEC for Transport and Public Works, Marius Fransman.

Mr. Manyathi said the suspension was needed to implement a turnaround strategy for the POLB. The strategy aims to clear the backlog of unprocessed applications. He emphasized the suspension of new application was temporary.

Applications that are pending and are compliant and have been submitted before the cut-off date will still be considered, if applicants can produce proof of the submission, according to him.

"The suspension is to implement a best practice model. We are upgrading systems. One benefit of upgrading the systems is that we would be able to improve law enforcement.

Eventually we will be able to process applications much quicker than what the turnaround time is at present," Mr. Manyathi said.

According to Mr. Manyathi one of motivation for the suspension is the rollout of the negotiated public transport contracts as part of the Department's Public Transport Improvement Programme (PTIP).

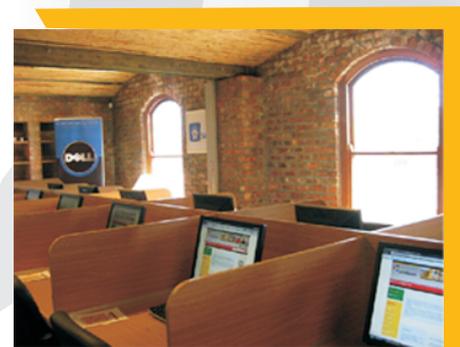
The benefit of a negotiated agreement is that the taxi industry will be included in subsidised services. There will also be a unified service with existing bus and taxi passenger's service redesigned into a single integrated service as well as an Integrated Fare Management System, said Mr Manyathi .

In future all services will be provided based on contracts between operators and the government (Department or Public Transport Operating Trading Entity).

Mr. Manyathi says operators, especially minibus taxi operators will need to form business entities to enter into contract with Government. He says shareholding in those business entities will be determined by among others the number of

operating licences each operator has.

"The effective and efficient functioning of the Operating License Board remains a challenge in order to comply with the 90 day turn around period for applications. Although we have tried to implement new systems and processes at the POLB this was done whilst receiving a constant stream of applications and had never allowed the POLB to address the back logs with regards to the finalization of applications" according to Mr Manyathi.



Tsoga Centre Computer Hub, Samora Mitchell

Minister Marius Fransman MEC for Transport and Public Works opened the Tsoga Centre Computer Hub in Samora Mitchell which will form part of the Expanded Public Works Programme's, Umsebenzi Porthole. The computer hub was proudly sponsored by Dell South Africa Development Fund and Sanlam.