

# Flexi-time and carpooling the cure for traffic congestion?

The construction of new road infrastructure is not enough to solve Cape Town's traffic congestion or improve the long-term sustainability of the city with a rapidly growing population. Therefore, the City of Cape Town has published a draft Travel Demand Management Strategy which proposes interventions to change motorists' travel patterns as well as their reliance on private vehicles.



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The City is spending R750 million on road infrastructure projects over the next five years to address the three main congestion hotspots in the city, namely Kommetjie, Kuils River and Blaauwberg. A total of R40 million was spent in the past financial year (2015/16) to kick-start the Congestion Management Programme and another R118 million is earmarked for the current financial year (2016/17).

## We cannot build ourselves out of congestion

"The stark reality remains, however, that we cannot build ourselves out of congestion and that constructing new roads only provides short-term relief. Transport for Cape Town (TCT), the City's transport authority, is therefore also embarking on operational and behavioral interventions that will complement the infrastructure interventions that we have identified in our Congestion Management Programme," said the City's Mayoral Committee Member: Transport for Cape Town, councillor Brett Herron.

The draft Travel Demand Management Strategy (TDMS), which is available for public comment until 28 October 2016, makes proposals about how the City will take the lead in changing the travel patterns of officials. Residents and interested parties, in particular businesses who employ a large number of employees, are requested to comment on this draft strategy.

"Although the TDMS focuses on the interventions that the City can make, we need our residents and local businesses to start thinking about what they can do from their side. The TDMS should spark a debate among all of us about how our choices and behaviour can contribute to creating a more sustainable Cape Town. The City, as an employer, will provide direction and leadership on these measures. However, the intention is not for us to do it alone. Other road users must share the responsibility in alleviating congestion by changing when and how they travel.

## Flexi-time and remote working

The private sector, which employs a large number of residents across Cape Town, must assist us with innovative solutions: for example, they can implement flexi-time and compressed work weeks, or remote working for their employees where possible," said Herron.

The City's draft TDMS makes proposals on how the movement of people across the city can be better managed for the efficient use of the current road capacity, as well as promoting more sustainable choices – be it making use of public transport services, carpooling, or working at different times.

"Car ownership among Capetonians is higher than ever before. Due to the demand and population growth, many residents spend about three hours on the city's arterial routes during the peak-hour traffic periods on weekdays. Also, historic and inflexible working hours require most employees to start and finish working between 8am and 5pm. This contributes to the traffic congestion and is exacerbated by the general trend that employees travel in the same direction towards the centres of employment," said Herron.

As such, the TDMS proposes that the City leads by example through flexi-time or remote working arrangements for officials where it is workable.

"Flexi-time, for example, can allow officials to begin and end working at non-standard times within limits set by management; others may be allowed to work from home during the peak and can then travel to their workplace during the off-peak. Or, some officials could be allowed to work from a satellite office for a specified number of days or hours a week. These are all proposals that the City needs to investigate and implement where feasible. We will also approach the private sector over the next few months to find out how they intend to better manage their employees' working hours. The City cannot do this alone. The TDMS will only succeed with the buy-in from all of us living in the city – from the City itself to our residents and business community,' said Herron.

Once the final TDMS is adopted by Council, the City will seek to implement these measures within the next three to five years.

## **Residents should also consider changing their travel behaviour to help reduce the demand for additional road space and lowering our carbon emissions by:**

- relying less on private vehicles
- using public transport services
- making use of carpooling where two or more passengers travel in the same direction

'We want our residents to consider alternatives. For example, instead of travelling in the peak hours five times a week, some of us can consider departing in the off-peak periods twice a week. Instead of driving to work in our own car every day of the week, we can consider carpooling with those travelling in the same direction once or twice a week. Walking and cycling must be considered for shorter trips, in particular in the inner-city, and we must use public transport where possible,' said Councillor Herron.

The draft TDMS is available on the City's [website](#), at libraries across the city, and at sub-council offices.

"Please read the TDMS and contact us with your comments and proposals – all interested and affected parties have time until 28 October 2016 to do so. Flexible working programmes have been implemented successfully in other countries. If managed right, this can increase job satisfaction and productivity, and it definitely helps to reduce the stress of sitting idly in peak-hour traffic and can lower our carbon emissions. We all have to work together in alleviating traffic congestion and in building a more sustainable and functioning city where we all can fulfil our potential," said Herron.

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