**GO!Durban starts moving towards its delivery of the IRPTN**

The GO!Durban project which will provide a fully integrated rapid public transport network for the people of eThekwini has started to roll-out ahead of major milestones in the first quarter of 2014. The city’s future vision to be one of Africa's leading metropolitan areas by 2030 will soon revolutionize and modernize the way of life for all citizens, tourists and business people travelling through our City.

The award of 6 construction contracts to the value of R3 billion for the C3 (Pinetown to Bridge City) corridor will take place shortly. The 7th contractor is already on site. Tenders for construction on corridors C1 (Bridge City to CBD) and C9 (Bridge City to Umhlanga) are scheduled to be advertised before the end of the financial year. Tenders for the Integrated Fare Management Services (IFMS) and Intelligent Transport System (ITS) have already been advertised, and should be awarded by May 2014. The commencement of construction, consolidation of the Muvo Card (the cashless card system) engaging with community stakeholders, businesses and the eThekwini citizens, as well as the launch of a mobile marketing bus will drive the project in early 2014.

The roll-out of GO!Durban is based on a “wall to wall” plan, which details a network of 9 trunk corridors supported by feeder and complimentary services covering the whole City, with different modes of public transport (rail, bus and taxi) integrated to provide seamless, efficient and affordable service. Phase 1, which consists of C1, C2 (Bridge City to Umlazi – rail), C3 and C9 corridors, is planned for completion by 2018.

The Phase 1 network will accommodate approximately 25% of the City’s public transport demand on corridors C1, C3 & C9, with a further 40% being accommodated on the C2 rail corridor, as part of Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) implementation plans. This approach ensures a recognisable benefit to the maximum number of users in the shortest period of time.

Construction on C3 corridor will see construction of dedicated median bus lanes, as well as platforms for transfer stations, which will be built under a separate contract. On some sections of the corridor, like through the Pinetown CBD, the road will be rehabilitated, strengthened and widened, as necessary and current traffic problems in the area addressed.

The commencement of construction activities will also mark the start of the implementation of the GO!Durban Empowerment Charter, which promotes participation of priority business entities in all contracts, subcontracting to local contractors and sourcing of materials from local suppliers. The Charter also promotes the utilization of local unskilled labour, skills development, employment of unemployed graduates and corporate social investment.

Negotiations with existing minibus taxi and bus operators with regard to their participation in the GO!Durban system will be crucial for the success of the system. Consultation between the ETA and operators has been ongoing for quite some time.The primary aim of this consultation has been to achieve in principle support for the new system, as well as set out the framework and principles to guide the negotiations around service delivery contracts to be signed with operators. Memoranda of Agreement between the City and the operators are planned for signing in the near future.

PRASA (Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa) continues to drive the improvements along the C2 Corridor with approximately R1 billion being earmarked for upgrade of their stations as part of the National Modernization Programme. Additional investments will go toward upgrading the signalling system and infrastructure on the corridor, as well as the acquisition of new rolling stock, with delivery of new train sets expected to start toward the end of 2015.

The GO!Durban activation bus has been launched which provides a mobile promotional and information platform to engage with communities, schools and public forums from meetings to events to disseminate information about the project. The bus was launched at the ETA by His Worship The Mayor Cllr James Nxumalo and Head of ETA Mr Thami Manyathi. “As GO!Durban will have a significant impact on every single one of our citizens, we wish to extend our communication into the heart of as many communities as we can” said Cllr Nxumalo, “While we will have an information centre at our project office in Morningside, and we have numerous engagements planned with stakeholders, we want to be able to speak to as many people as we can, to inform them about the project, to help them understand the benefits of the new system, and to get them excited about their future, living in the city. This activation bus will mean that we are mobile, and accessible to an optimum number of the people in the city.” The vehicle was used for transport between the Airport and Moses Mabhida Stadium for the World Cup and has been customised to provide information screens, a Muvo Card machine and mobile PA system for interactive and experiential promotions in all environments. The Bus will activate information days to communities and schools prior to the roll out of the GO!Durban system.

Access to more information on tender applications, construction, information days, community engagement and other public forums or engagements can be found on the GO! Durban website [www.godurban.co.za](http://www.godurban.co.za)