PRESS STATEMENT

11/06/2014

CITY URGES TAXI OPERATORS TO MARCH PEACEFULLY

EThekwini Municipality is aware of the march by members of the KZN Transport Alliance taking place in the Durban CBD today, 11/06/2014.

The public is assured that all the necessary security measures have been put in place by the Metro Police, SAPS Public Order Policing and Crime Intelligence to ensure that the march is peaceful.

The Municipality urges the event organisers to advise their members to refrain from vandalising Council property or causing any disturbances during the march.

The Municipality is aware of the issues that the KZN Transport Alliance is protesting about and wishes to respond to each issue as follows:

1. THE ISSUING OF OPERATING LICENCES

EThekwini Transport Authority (ETA) has been working closely with the KZN Department of Transport (KZNDoT) and its Public Regulatory Entity to take over the process and to have the licensing function devolved to the City. This project is driven by senior staff from both the City and the KZNDoT. Progress reports are being provided to the taxi industry structures. The City and KZNDoT engages with the taxi industry on this matter on a regular basis.

2. LAWS BEING IN ENGLISH

Law Enforcement Officers always explain to the drivers, in the language that they understand. In instances where a driver indicates that he/she does not understand English, the officers always get another officer to explain to the driver in a language that they understand.

Furthermore, drivers that are being charged have an opportunity to go to court to make a representation and challenge the fines in their own language.

The reality is that the drivers do not pay the admission of guilt or go to court to make a representation to challenge the offence they have been charged for, often resulting in them being in contempt of court and warrants of arrest being issued against them.

3. CITY SHUTTING THE ALLIANCE OUT

The allegation by the Alliance that the eThekwini Municipality is shutting them out is unfounded and a misrepresentation of facts. On 14 February 2014, the Municipality signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Taxi Industry.

The MOA spells out the principles as to how the Municipality and the Taxi industry will engage with the taxi operators so that they can be part of the GO!Durban project. The Chairperson of the Transport Alliance was one of the signatories of the MOA representing the Transport Alliance and the taxi Industry leadership structures who were the signatories of the MOA all have copies of the signed MOA.

The City, together with the taxi industry leadership and the taxi industry advisors that the City is providing to the taxi industry, is now preparing to convene roadshows and consultation workshops to the wider taxi industry members to make them aware and to understand the project and how they will participate in the project.

In terms of the National Land Transport Act, Act 5 of 2009, the City is the planning authority that has to plan, contract and regulate public transport services.

In the GO!Durban project, operations contracts will be negotiated between operating companies and the City and both bus and taxi operators coming together to form companies to be contracted to operate the different routes across the Municipality.

Issued by eThekwini Municipality’s Communications Head, Tozi Mthethwa.

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