



The head of the eThekweni transport authority, Thami Manyathi, approaches the finish line of the Go! Durban Amazing Race. The aim of the day was to expose those involved in planning the integrated rapid public transport network to commuters' everyday experiences.

PHOTO: MATTHEW MIDDLETON

Go! Durban team get down to the nitty gritty

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THE eThekweni transport department team that is expected to implement the city's ambitious Integrated Rapid Transport plan, took to buses, taxis, trains and bicycles yesterday to get a taste of what regular commuters experience on a daily basis.

This included sitting in a taxi hampering deafening house music, and standing in a stuffy bus in yesterday's 33 degrees Celsius, as the eThekweni Transport Authority staff toured the city and townships by public transport.

The aim was to expose those planning the integrated rapid public transport network — known as Go! Durban — to commuters' hardships.

"Now we're about to experience the standing capacity," one employee quipped as he stepped into an airless, crammed bus.



Commuter Ntando Phakathi, who uses a train daily from Umlazi to Effingham Heights, said the trains are often not on schedule, resulting in him getting to work late even though he leaves home at 5 am.

The head of the transport authority,

Thami Manyathi, said the experience had helped him identify the areas he'd like to fix.

He said some of the transport modes lack air-conditioning, an essential in Durban's hot weather, while the lack of integration between the modes caused

frustration.

But all these could be consigned to the past if the promises of the Integrated Rapid Transport plan are delivered.

The city says the Go! Durban network will see the development of nine corridors linked to various modes of transport across the city by 2027.

The initiative aims to provide affordable and accessible transport by connecting different areas and providing transport in areas not previously serviced.

Manyathi said the first phase of the project will start in the city centre next year, with other corridors to follow.

City manager S'bu Sithole said about R15 billion will be pumped into the project, which he believes will also create job opportunities while eliminating congestion on the highways. He said the city aspires to have an efficient transport system like Japan has.

Competitors in the Go! Durban Amazing Race participate in team-building challenges along the route.

PHOTO: MATTHEW MIDDLETON