

Millions earmarked for transport system

The airport access road, taxi and bus ranks are to be improved

NELSPRUIT - Nearly R210 million will be spent to improve Mbombela's roads and transport system in preparation for Fifa World Cup matches.

The money will be spent during the next three years to improve the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA) access road and taxi rank. Taxi and bus ranks at Mataffin precinct, Hazyview, White River, Rocky Drift and Riverside will also be developed.

"We are working towards an integrated infrastructure for public transport and roads," said Mbombela spokesman Mr Vusi Sibiyi. "Fifty five million rand has been allocated in the 2007/8 financial year. A memorandum of understanding has been entered into between the national department of transport and the

municipality. Consultants have been appointed to design both the R40 (Madiba Drive) and Mataffin access ring roads. We have submitted new priority statements for the unfunded road projects in eastern residential areas."

The countdown to 2010 has created a new dynamism in transport planning. In 2005, the public transport infrastructure systems fund was created to fast-track national government finance for transport services to help move people during the World Cup. Funding grants would be made for integrated urban public transport focusing on knitting communities

with places of work, recreation and leisure.

The fund's top priorities are the 2010 venue cities and projects closely surrounding them

that will improve transport in the wider commuting area. It is anticipated that 80% of the spectators at Mataffin stadium will come from the locality with the remaining foreign and South African visitors arriving by plane, train

and car.

The World-Cup organising committee CEO Dr Danny Jordaan said that transport planning nationwide was going well. He added that meetings were being held with

bus associations and called for more luxury coaches to ferry people from airports and to venues.

Senior commentators from other African countries have called for interlinking flights to be better organised. Although KMIA is anticipating a mass influx of domestic and foreign visitors in the period surrounding the tournament, airport management is not yet clear on exactly how many aircraft or from where they might be arriving.

"It is really early days in this respect," commented Mr Irvin Phenyane, KMIA business development manager. "The airline will decide its schedules in due course."



Would you like to comment on this article? SMS your comments to the editor. SMS LV4, followed by your name and your comment in less than 160 characters to 34431. SMS's charged at R2.