ADDRESS BY ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY MAYOR, CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE HANDING OVER OF A CONTRACTOR OF THE M4 SOUTH BOUND CARRIAGEWAY, 02 FEBRUARY 2023

- Programme Director
- Members of the Exco
- Councillors
- Amakhosi
- Transport stakeholders
- Distinguished guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

It gives me pleasure to welcome you today to this important occasion – the handing over of the contractor to commence with the rehabilitation of the M4 Inkosi Albert Luthuli Highway southbound carriageway.

Since transport and road infrastructure are the economic lifeblood of any city, we are delighted to see the beginning of this crucial project. For the city, the M4 is key because it connects the people who live in the south, in areas like Umlazi, Wentworth, Isipingo and Amanzimtoti, among others – to the CBD. It also plays an important role in the growth and sustainability of the Durban Harbour – the Sub-Saharan Africa's largest and busiest shipping terminal.

At the cost of over 121 million, the rehabilitation of this freeway, between Anton Lembede Street (Smith Street) and Pascoe/Reunion Road, is expected to take ten months and we would like to plead with all the motorists and residents to work with us during this period. We want to assure the public that we have taken every precaution to minimise traffic congestion and inconvenience during peak hours.

Due to high traffic volumes in this area, we have insisted that work must be done at night, with a minimum of one lane open to allow people to travel home from work and businesses in the transport sector, in particular – to operate optimally. During the day, the contractor is going to move the plant and equipment off the roadway to ensure there is no disruption of traffic.

Ladies and gentlemen, the ANC government has declared 2023 as the year of decisive action to advance the people's interests. In this regard, we will be redoubling our efforts to deliver on the promise of a better life for all.

The city continues to work hard to repair road, water and sanitation infrastructure that was damaged during last year's April and May floods. We are pleased with the work that is being done to repair our sewer pump stations and wastewater treatment plants which has led to more beaches being opened.

Work is also underway to upgrade our water infrastructure to improve water supply in various communities. Last week, we intervened in Hambanathi and Ntuzuma by installing water pumps in reservoirs that are supplying these communities with water. Early this month, the Minister of Water and Sanitation commissioned reservoir 3 at the Durban Heights which has improved water supply in areas such as Phoenix and Verulam.

In the next few weeks, we will be unlocking infrastructural challenges in all communities that are experiencing water shortages such as Ngonyameni, Zwelibomvu, Umzinyathi, Umlazi and Folweni.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as an ANC-led municipality and a caring government, we remain committed to ensuring local communities can benefit when such projects take place in the city. In line with our radical socio-economic transformation programme, the municipality took a decision that 30% of the contract value of all projects in the city must be allocated to local supplies.

We have no doubt that the improvements of this road will unlock economic opportunities which have been stifled for a while by various factors, including COVID-1 and the 2021 civil unrest. We are here to guarantee you that we remain focused on our mission to make eThekwini an example of how collaboration between various sectors of government, business and civil society can contribute to make an impactful difference to nation-building.

Working together with the SANDF, SANRAL and the provincial Department of Transport we have been able to fast track repairs to most of our strategic and economic routes particularly the N2, M4 North and M7.

With regards to access roads, we are happy to report that over 600 projects have been completed which include removing debris, minor and major repair works on bridges and gravel road network. This had resulted in areas that were hardest hit by the floods such as Lower Molweni, Mpola, Tshelimnyama, Wushwini and Umzinyathi to be accessible by public transport.

Lastly, we must all work together to ensure that we deliver quality services to our people so that we can be able to realise our vision of making eThekwini the most caring and liveable city.

I thank you