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NEW DEAL FOR METERED TAXI CABS
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BOB MARLEY EXHIBITION FOR DURBS
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WAY TO GO: The new people mover buses on Smith Street
Picture: BONGA MSIMANG

Stadium funding: city upbeat

KEN MCHUNU and SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

TOP eThekweni officials are investigating ways to make up the shortfall in funding for the 2010 stadium.

The National Treasury Department initially allocated eThekweni a R1.8 billion budget towards the building of the King Senzangakhona stadium. But a sharp rise in projected costs for the stadium has left the city with a R600-million shortfall.

eThekweni's Head of Strategic Projects and the 2010 Programme Julie-May Ellingson, who was in Cape Town this week to brief parliament on the stadium, was confident that talks between the city and other spheres of government would yield positive results.

"We are in negotiation with central government and the Treasury to seek ways of addressing the challenges," she said.

"Collectively, we will be looking at a range of measures to cut costs and identify additional alternate sources of funding," she said.

Ellingson said stadium piling and earthworks would not be disrupted while negotiations continued.

City Manager Michael Sutcliffe said the city was looking at various options and would discuss these at a full council meeting next week.

He remained upbeat that a solution would be found.

"We are facing some challenges in that there is about a R600-million difference between what had been allocated by National Treasury and what the tender process suggested the stadium would cost," he said.

eThekweni is one of the five cities that this week briefed the National Sports Committee in parliament on some of the challenges presented by the 2010 budget shortfall.

Besides eThekweni, other cities experiencing shortfalls in their budgets include: Cape Town – R1.25-billion, Nelson Mandela Bay (Port Elizabeth) – R262-million, Polokwane – R576-million, and Mbombela – R97-million.

Host cities were expecting shortfalls due to inflation, the exchange rate and rising costs of equipment and materials.

National Sports Committee Chairman Butana Komphela said this week he was confident that the National Treasury would come up with a solution that would not harm the host cities. He said the Treasury had been expecting escalation.

We will be looking at a range of measures to cut costs and identify alternate sources of funding

eThekweni's Julie-May Ellingson

Just the ticket for tourists

KEN MCHUNU

THE council's Executive Committee toured the city aboard the much-anticipated people mover at its recent official unveiling.

The service is set to hit our streets in March, with 10 air-conditioned, hi-tech buses providing smooth public transport in the CBD.

The people mover forms part of a redesign process that the city is undergoing ahead of the World Cup.

Sue Bannister, Deputy Head of Strategic Projects in eThekweni, said the people mover buses – each with a price tag of R1.3-million – were built to a standard comparable to buses used in major European cities.

She said transport would be important to the success of hosting the world cup – "hence the idea of the people mover".

"It caters for a wide range of passengers and will be operating

under a strict security system," she said. Bannister was referring to the closed circuit surveillance cameras installed in each bus and wardens who would be stationed at all of the service's 16 bus stops to help tourists and passengers.

People mover buses have an adjustable access ramp – helpful for wheelchair users and passengers with baby prams. And onboard TVs display information about locations and tourist attractions in the city.

Bannister said delays in the introduction of the service were due to prolonged negotiations over who would run the buses. She said it was eventually decided that Remant Alton would get the job. The company already runs the former municipal bus service.

Another delaying factor, said Bannister, was the training of bus drivers. "Our drivers are undergoing intense training in skills and public

relations, as well as information on city destinations that the bus will reach," she said.

The people mover will cover the beachfront and inner city routes from 6am to 11.30pm every day.

The beachfront route runs from the stadium, by way of Suncoast Casino, to uShaka Marine World. The inner-city route starts at the Golden Mile, and runs by way of the CBD, to the Victoria Market.

Each bus would carry 44 passengers, with 25 seated and 15 standing. Single-trip fares would be R5 and R15 for a day's ticket.

She said she had received complaints about the new people mover bus stop shelters. "People complained the shelters were facing the wrong way, which is not true. They were intentionally made to face away from the road to protect passengers from the wind and rain while waiting for the bus," she said.

warned that while the situation at Eskom had improved significantly, consumers still needed to manage power wisely.

He said that in the event of an electricity generation shortage, eThekweni would be forced to limit power supplies to selected areas at certain times to boost the national power supply and to avoid a complete blackout in the city.

"Municipalities across the country have been requested (by Eskom) to shed a percentage of their non-

critical load. EThekweni is participating in this programme and would (if requested by Eskom) be interrupting supplies to selected areas for about two hours," said Maphumulo.

However, he assured the public that they would be informed of any actions to be taken and that the electricity load would be shared fairly across the metro.

Eskom said in a press statement that the rapidly depleting energy sources in South Africa meant

electricity had to be used efficiently and appropriately.

The service provider has also started an awareness campaign which will flight "Power Alert" messages on television to notify the public on the status of national power supplies.

The alerts have four status levels – green, orange, red and brown.

Green indicates a limited strain on the national supply.

Orange indicates an electricity strain – consumers are prompted to

switch off non-essential appliances such as tumble dryers and dishwashers.

Red indicates an increased strain on the power supply with consumers prompted to switch off stoves, microwaves, kettles and unnecessary lights.

Brown indicates significant strain and that load-shedding was in progress in parts of the country – consumers are asked to switch off everything that is not absolutely essential, including geysers.

Use electricity wisely – residents told

SIYABONGA MAPHUMULO

THE city's Electricity Department has assured the public that there will be no major power shortages in the eThekweni area.

This comes after Eskom, the national electricity provider, announced its two main power plants, Lethabo in the Free State, and Koeberg in Cape Town, were back on full load.

But the municipality's Head of Electricity, Sandile Maphumulo, has