

Mossel Bay infrastructure upgrade set to boost Garden Route economy

The Western Cape Department of Infrastructure is progressing on the upgrade of Louis Fourie Road in Mossel Bay, with completion expected within the deadline. The project, which is the largest provincial infrastructure initiative in the area, began in July 2022 and is slated for completion in 2026.



The upgrade, which includes the section of Trunk Road 33 from Beach Boulevard West to Garret Street, is designed to improve traffic flow in the rapidly expanding coastal town. Louis Fourie Road serves as a vital link between Mossel Bay, Diaz Beach, Voorbaai, and Hartenbos.

Advocate Chantal Smith, acting head of department, highlighted the project's employment goals, which include providing at least 58,000 person-days of work to targeted labour. To date, 13,057 have been completed, equating to 104 of the projected 250 work opportunities. With a targeted enterprise spending goal exceeding R85m, the Louis Fourie Road upgrade is a key project for the Department of Infrastructure.

Provincial Minister of Infrastructure, Tertuis Simmers, emphasised the economic value of the project, particularly as it connects residential and business areas. The department is responsible for nearly 87% of all infrastructure investment in the Garden Route District.



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The upgrade of the single-lane carriageway to a dual-lane carriageway over a 3.5km section of Louis Fourie Road, along with the upgrading of intersections, construction of a central median, realignment of the Langeberg Mall access road to Depot Road, upgrading of the Langeberg Mall approach road to Louis Fourie Road, and the realignment of the N2 ramp terminal to Vyfbrakkefontein Road, including the construction of a new traffic circle, will have a positive impact on the economy.

Relocating water main

The project scope also includes relocating a municipal water main, a municipal sewer trunk main, and the municipal Loftly Nel electricity substation, constructing a new rail-over-road bridge at Garret Street, constructing a new bridge over the Blinde River, repairing an existing portal culvert, building numerous retaining walls, and periodic maintenance consisting of an asphalt mill and overlay between Marsh Street and Hartenbos.

Care has been taken to protect the PetroSA pipeline located on Vyfbrakkefontein Road, and the raw water scour valve and chamber on a PetroSA water line will be relocated.

From a pedestrian safety perspective, the project includes the construction of a separate pedestrian sidewalk of approximately 900m on Louis Fourie Road (TR33/2) between Waboom Road and Sonskynvallei.

Current construction activities include temporary widening on the land side of the existing road for traffic accommodation purposes, the connection of the main sewer, protection works to PetroSA infrastructure, installing Telkom sleeves and relocating Telkom cables, building retaining walls at various locations, and installing a ground beam at the completed Garret Street rail-over-road bridge.

The installation of temporary and permanent stormwater pipes continues. As part of the permanent roadworks, the pioneer layer at the Blinde River Bridge is being constructed while temporary on- and off-ramps are being built from the N2 to accommodate traffic during the construction of Vyfbrakkefontein Road.

Efforts to bring date forward

The department cautions road users against using the newly surfaced sections. While the temporary lanes may seem to be finished, several works still need to be completed. The envisaged date of moving traffic over to the temporary lanes on the land side of the project is towards the end of May 2024, and concerted efforts are being made to bring this date forward.

Points persons were deployed to direct traffic when the traffic signals at Watson Avenue recently became defective until the faulty cable could be replaced. Unprecedented levels of rain overwhelmed the capacity of 1,000mm stormwater pipes at the intersection of Louis Fourie Road and George Road.

The partially collapsed culvert under the fill embankment at the intersection of Louis Fourie Road and George Street will be replaced by two 1,800mm stormwater pipes which have since been installed to handle heavy downpours in the future. Resurfacing and road marking will take place during the mill and fill process later in the project to avoid unnecessary costs.

"Through this project, a variety of job opportunities will be created for job seekers as well as the empowerment of small medium, and micro enterprise (SMMEs). This is further evidence of our commitment to using infrastructure projects as development opportunities in the Western Cape," said the minister.

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