

## **Statement by the City's Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille**

### **City looking for a private partner to unlock the potential of our iconic unfinished highways**

The unfinished highways on the western, central and eastern side of the Foreshore Freeway Precinct have been part of the Cape Town city landscape for nearly five decades now. They are the theme of many urban legends – we have all heard imaginative stories about how they came about and why they were built, seemingly leading to nowhere.

In the 1970s, at the time when engineers designed the freeways and embarked on the ambitious roads project, the traffic flowing into and out of the city was not nearly at the level that we are experiencing today. The project was subsequently abandoned, mainly due to a lack of funds and the fact that the volume of traffic was too low to warrant any further investment.

Now, about 50 years later, these skeleton-like structures still stand unfinished and unused, in the midst of horrific traffic congestion.

Not only are they useless, other than for film shoots, they are also preventing the development of prime City-owned land – known as the Foreshore Freeway Precinct – that is locked in under and between the existing highways and the harbour.

When I became the Mayor, I pledged to do something about the unfinished bridges.

In 2012, the City partnered with the University of Cape Town's Engineering and Built Environment faculty where students had to explore and find innovative proposals for the future of the foreshore and the unfinished freeways.

In 2014, as part of our World Design Capital tenure, the City hosted an exhibition showcasing the ideas of the UCT students.

It was foreseen that, following an adjudication process, these ideas could form the basis for a concept for the future of the foreshore precinct.

In terms of our proposal as to what to do with the unfinished freeways, it is vital that we find a long-term solution to alleviate congestion.

The way the City imagines this is that we will leverage the City-owned land beneath the unfinished bridges for development and part of the conditions for the development will be that it include the funds to complete the unfinished bridges, alleviate congestion and provide affordable housing.

The City has already committed R750 million over five years for various congestion relief projects across the city.

The solution to the unfinished bridges must assist our range of efforts to alleviate congestion.

This is why the City will, on 8 July 2016, issue a document calling on prospective investors and developers, or a consortium, to provide us with a solution which will address the congestion we are currently facing in this precinct.

This document – called the Prospectus for the Development of the Foreshore Freeway Precinct – will provide interested parties with all of the necessary information about the City-owned land that we will make available to the private sector in return for the provision of road infrastructure and a development that will drive sustainable economic growth.

A pivotal requirement for those wanting to bid is that their development proposal must provide housing opportunities for a diverse cross-section of income groups.

By this I mean that a percentage of this development must be earmarked for affordable housing opportunities to those beneficiaries and applicants who qualify for these opportunities in terms of the City's policies.

This requirement is very important because the City of Cape Town is committed to redress and to providing residents from previously disadvantaged areas with access to housing opportunities and work opportunities within the Cape Town central business district.

As such, the development of the Foreshore Freeway Precinct provides us with an opportunity to address the legacy of apartheid spatial planning.

The prospectus will provide clarity on the size and exact location of the land; the requirements for the development proposals coming from the private sector; the timelines; and the processes to be followed in appointing the successful bidder, among others.

The prospectus will be a public document.

Most importantly, the residents of Cape Town will get the opportunity to be involved with this exciting project and Councillor Brett Herron, the Mayoral Committee Member: Transport for Cape Town, will provide more details about this process.

Whether the unfinished highways stay or go, are completed, or redesigned altogether, is for the proposed bidders to put forward.

Any proposal should foremost resolve the traffic congestion and access to and from the city centre and provide us with an affordable housing component.

We are looking forward to finding a partner from the private sector who will be able to provide us with an imaginative and creative solution – one that will add to the attractiveness of Cape Town as an international destination, and at the same time assist us to address the challenges of a steadily growing city centre where traffic congestion is impeding the realisation of the city's full potential.

This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a new chapter in urban design and development – an opportunity not to be missed.