

Unified ticketing key to Cape Town Metrorail handover

Independent Online reports that National Department of Transport director-general George Mahlelela said the first handover of some Metrorail operational functions from the state-owned Passenger Rail Agency of SA (Prasa) to the Cape Town municipality would not happen before a due diligence assessment on the metro's capacity was completed.

"The end state is that you will have an integrated municipal transport system," said Mahlelela.

It has been proposed, he added, that municipalities should integrate the ticketing systems for public transport so that a commuter would use the same ticket to catch a taxi from home to a bus station, then take a bus to a railway station and catch a train to work. Mahlelela said this was currently split across national, provincial and local levels. "We therefore need to consolidate all these functions and locate it in the municipality," Mahlelela said.

According to Independent Online, while the idea is to have unified tickets used eventually around the country, the municipalities must first have the capacity to do that. "It might take a year, it might take five years, it might take 10 years." The municipalities might make a little money from this, but would be expected to put this back into the system. "The integrated ticketing system is the most important element of the evolution of public transport in South Africa," Mahlelela said, adding that Cape Town was the logical city to start as its commuter system revolved around rail.

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