

Commuters embracing public transport during EcoMobility World Festival

When the EcoMobility World Festival, driven by the City of Johannesburg, launched on Monday 5 October, the city's road engineers counted some 100 commuters using specially provided park-and-ride facilities to get to Sandton. Since then, the number of people using public and alternative transport into Sandton has grown.



Sandton Central

By Friday, 9 October, this numbers rocketed to 500 travellers headed to Sandton. Last week, figures rose above 640 on Tuesday, and stayed at similar levels for the rest of the week, with the exception of Thursday 14 October, where user numbers peaked at a new high of 774. The higher levels of park-and-ride users looks set to continue, with 661 people choosing this public transport option to reach Sandton on Monday, 19 October 2015.

Gautrain also released figures showing a substantial passenger increase of 7.7% on its train passenger trips on the first few days of the EcoMobility World Festival. On the first day of the festival the Gautrain recorded its highest Monday passenger trip count with an average of 60,120 passengers using the service on the day compared with the normal 55,800 average Monday passenger trips. The bus service increased by 512 passenger trips with an average of 21,076 passengers using the bus service on the day. A total of 2,934 non-train users were also recorded on buses.



Elaine Jack

Better ways to get around

Elaine Jack, City Improvement District Manager for Sandton Central Management District (SCMD), says these figures alone reveal people coming into Sandton are making more eco-friendly choices in the ways they get around.

"The growing participation and response shows people are integrating new ways to move around Sandton into their lifestyles, shifting from private cars to public transport," says Jack. She points out that many other people are doing the same, but using ways of moving around South Africa's financial hub that are less measurable, like walking between locations within Sandton Central, cycling and sharing vehicles.

"Over and above people trying new, better, and more environmentally respectful ways of getting around Sandton as part of this global event, it seems many drivers are taking time to plan their trips in advance and understand the changes to the

roads," notes Jack. She adds the increased, visible presence of the Johannesburg Metro Police Department - which has been monitoring and managing Sandton's streets during the festival - has also played a big part in helping people get around, making commuters feel safer and keeping traffic flowing better.

"Easy access to Sandton is important to ensure it remains the preferred location of choice for business, living, leisure and tourism in the city. The JMPD has shown its presence has a significant impact in keeping traffic smooth and ensuring cyclists and pedestrians are safe," says Jack.

One ways and cul-de-sacs

She stresses that despite initial concerns, visitors to Sandton in the early days of the festival quickly realised that all vehicles still have full access to the Sandton CBD during the festival, even though some streets have managed access. The only road changes for the festival are that there are no through routes on West Street or Maude Street. The section of Maude Street from West to Rivonia will be a one way eastbound. Alice Lane, Gwen Lane and Maude Street between 5th and West Street will effectively be cul-de-sacs.

Doing its part for the EcoMobility World Festival, SCMD has been a platform of communication between the City of Johannesburg and businesses in the Sandton CBD. This began early in the preparation stages of the festival and, now the festival is underway, it continues to share important information to help everyone get into and around the Sandton CBD during the festival.

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