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EcoMobility
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Johannesburg EcoMobility World Festival

An initial glimpse of the success during the first 10 days

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Why action is needed



This road is usually filled with cars. Now people reclaim the area for a picnic.

The central business district of Sandton in Johannesburg, South Africa - often referred to as Africa's richest square mile - is where the second EcoMobility World Festival is underway in the month of October. More than 100,000 cars enter and leave Sandton daily. The resulting congestion has negative impacts on health, productivity, CO₂ emissions and air pollution, thus degrading the quality of life in the city.

Even more relevant is the inequity among commuting modes to reach work places. Big cars often carrying one

Ecomobility means traveling through integrated, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly transport options, giving priority to walking and cycling, public transport and shared mobility.

Ecomobility thus is an essential element of urban sustainable and low carbon transportation, offering a wide range of benefits.

person occupy more space than the space allocated for the larger number of pedestrians who only have narrow, uneven and in some instances unpaved footpaths.

One of the reasons why the City of Johannesburg is hosting the EcoMobility World Festival is to highlight and address this disparity.

Following the international paradigm of compact and people-friendly cities, Sandton is currently being densified: more than 350,000 m² of office space, housing, shops and mixed-use facilities are under construction. The local government leadership in Johannesburg is determined to shift the current trend and increase the use of walking, cycling and public transport to decongest Sandton.

The ecomobility challenge to CBD commuters

The Mayoral Committee of the City of Johannesburg headed by Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Franklyn Mpho Parks Tau decided in 2014 to partner with ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability to host Africa's first EcoMobility World Festival in Sandton in October 2015.

During the month-long Festival, certain road spaces have been converted into 'ecomobile zones'. Central streets are entirely or partially closed to personal automobiles; park and ride facilities are offered, temporary express lanes for public transport have been organised. Priority is given to moving people over moving vehicles.

The slogan of the Festival is "Change the way you move".

After an extensive and inclusive consultation and communication campaign, commuters to Sandton, residents and the many visitors are strongly motivated to walk, cycle and take public transport.



Experts ride ecomobility vehicles to display commitment

The Mayor, the Premier of Gauteng Provincial Government, the National Transport Minister and many other local government and business leaders have taken up the challenge to use ecomobility and have urged residents also to do so.

The Executive Mayor who moved his office to Sandton for the period of the Festival has also become multimodal in his trips by walking, cycling and using the Gautrain or park and rides to Sandton.

“We want to show the world that the residents of Johannesburg are one – and what better place to demonstrate than in the most common public space of our city, the roads”

CLlr Christine Walters, the Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) of Johannesburg for Transport.

A number of changes have been made to road use. Roads that were previously dominated by cars are now dedicated to pedestrians or public transport use. This has made street use safer and attractive. The key changes introduced are dedicated public transport lanes, pedestrian and cycling lanes, conversion of two way streets into one way streets for automobiles, and blocking through traffic from some roads.



Children can freely ride a bicycle because of the Festival.

Access, safety and comfort leads to behavioural change

The Festival is an intensive awareness raising and behavioural change campaign preparing the mid and long-term transformation of Johannesburg’s transport system by expanding the access to the bus rapid transport service – Rea Vaya, the Gautrain – a high speed intercity rail, and improved cycle and walking infrastructure. They are thus increasing the mobility and access by the people in Johannesburg in meeting their every day commuting needs.

The EcoMobility World Festival has also focused on the disadvantaged in urban mobility and the inequitable use of road space. For example, 10,000 people walk daily 5 - 6 km to work from the low-income township of Alexandra to Sandton. These include women and young people who are exposed to safety risks, noise and air pollution leading to possible health problems.

Urban mobility and climate change

The transport sector already contributes the second highest share at **27% of energy-related CO2** emissions globally, and is the fastest growing sector in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Targeting the emission reduction from urban transport is a key aspect of the Festival, and thus changing urban mobility infrastructure and behaviour is an important means to combat climate change.

The expert events and various public activities of the City of Johannesburg supported by ICLEI have successfully contributed to the international discussion on urban mobility and climate change.

Johannesburg itself is subject to negative impacts of climate change such as heavy rains and flooding, infrastructure failure, heat waves and more. These raise growing concerns and readiness to act on GHG emissions.

Strong political will can make urban mobility greener



Key decision makers from all spheres of governments meet to show commitment to ecomobility

The Festival opened with an action commitment by all spheres of government. Strong opening speeches confirmed commitments to transforming the regional transport system. Leaders committed to the EcoMobility World Festival included the Premier of Gauteng Province, **Mr David Makhura**; Member of the Executive Council at the provincial level for Roads and Transport, **Mr Ismail Vadi**, as well as the South African Minister for Transport, **Ms Dipuo Peters**. They reconfirmed their plans to expand and improve the public transport in South African cities.

Mr Tae-Young Yeom, Mayor of Suwon, South Korea and host of the first [EcoMobility World Festival in 2013](#), handed over a golden bike to his counterpart Mayor Parks Tau of Johannesburg. The golden bike is a symbolic gesture of passing on the ecomobility culture developed through the EcoMobility Festival in Suwon to Johannesburg.

EcoMobility Dialogues advance knowledge and foster exchange of international and national experts

The **EcoMobility Dialogues** (5-8 October 2015) saw almost 500 participants from local governments, international organisations, academia and NGOs from five continents. The Dialogues were rich in content and offered plenty of opportunities for exchange among international and national experts and with media.

Key issues discussed include:

Reshaping cities for ecomobility

Achieving and enabling new and shared forms of mobility

Making the commuting decision safe, sustainable and popular.

Technical experts and key decision makers of cities deliberated on the transport and climate change divide and explored options to bridge the gap.

The technical expert papers are available for download under <http://www.ecomobilityfestival.org/technical-papers/>

“The way forward for mobility in our cities in ecomobility and the discussions and outcomes of the EcoMobility Dialogues corroborate this” Santhosh Kodukula, EcoMobility Program Manager, ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

Presentations and impressions

- All the presentations of the Dialogues will be available on [our website](#) from mid October 2015. Short video clips of presentations will soon follow.
- The pictures taken at the Dialogues can be viewed on our [Flickr page](#)
- Do stay connected with us on Twitter [@ecomobility](#) and learn more about the Festival outcomes at #JoburgEcoMobility
- More about the Dialogues and Festival can also be seen on our [EcoMobility Blogs](#)
- You may also want to endorse and support the Johannesburg Declaration on Ecomobility in Cities



EcoMobility Dialogues was a meeting of the minds locally, nationally, regionally and globally to share experiences and implement actions

The Johannesburg Declaration on Ecomobility in Cities

A major outcome of the EcoMobility Dialogues is the adoption of the **Johannesburg Declaration on Ecomobility in Cities**, which serves as a commitment by cities around the world to implement ecomobility, as well as a call to national and international decision makers for a stronger support to ecomobility.

Executive Mayor Parks Tau of Johannesburg will take the Declaration to the UN Climate Summit (COP21) in Paris in December 2015.

“We cities are not going to Paris to say that climate change is a complex issue to solve”, said Executive Mayor Parks Tau. “We’ll bring solutions”.

The full text of the Declaration is available at <http://www.ecomobilityfestival.org/the-johannesburg-declaration/>

From the Declaration:

We city leaders commit to ...

Adopt urban mobility policies that replace automobile centred cities with people-friendly cities by increasing the share of walking, cycling, public transport and other forms of shared mobility. Mobility in our cities needs to be integrated, safe, comfortable, equitable, environmentally friendly, low carbon, low cost and effective.

We city leaders request all national and sub-national governments to ...

Establish national strategies, programmes and policies including financial support and incentive schemes that support cities in the provision and maintenance of ecomobile infrastructures and services.



Local leaders, city officials, experts discuss the Declaration text with Johannesburg officials and ICLEI on 8 October 2015.

Watch one of the many videos featuring city leaders on the Festival and the Declaration:

<https://youtu.be/FknwBNmot88?t=4m37s>

Streets Alive in Sandton

Closing streets for cars alone is not convincing. The motto in Johannesburg is “opening the streets” and thus during the entire Festival month, special activities are organised.

- Streets Alive on Sunday, 4 October followed the opening session
- A Freedom ride on 11 October brought ca. 4000 bicycle users around the city in a nearly 30 km ride. Not only that they got preference on their route, they also realized that the group of bike users is growing even in a Southern, hot and still car-centred city. Diverse vehicles could be seen.
- Road Safety Family Day on 11 October and
- Street Sports Weekend on 17-18 October.



Streets are alive with people reclaiming the road space

Exhibition and museum of transport

Alternatives to cars are diverse, but who knows these? An exhibition with a variety of diverse vehicles, including small electric vehicles, is open to the public each day from 12.00 to 18.00. A test track allows to feel, touch and try out.

The EcoMobility World Exhibition has a number of components including a historical timeline, on line exhibition, static displays and a test track. The focus of the Exhibition is on ecomobile vehicles including electric vehicles which are powered by an on site solar charger. Many people visit the exhibition on their way to and from work.

The attached Johannesburg transport museum explains to adults and especially to young people how mobility patterns have changed over time, how much still the apartheid induced urban infrastructure determines the city live and why things go wrong in traffic. Various displays and a game indicates to young and adult visitors that the future of urban mobility lies in ecomobility as integrated use of alternatives to the private car.

Starting the first bike sharing company in Johannesburg

Two young entrepreneurs, Lesego Sethusa and Filile Masadlela, will be opening the first bike share opportunity in Sandton during the Festival month of October. They start their company with 20 bikes donated by the city of Kaohsiung and further bikes being donated by ICLEI to the Festival.



The bikes to start a new beginning the new bike sharing system in Sandton are handed over from Monika Zimmermann, ICLEI Deputy Secretary General to the Member of the Mayoral Committee, Cllr Christine Walters and further to the young entrepreneurs. Volunteers (in orange) help.

Media outreach as a key element for awareness raising and getting the local and global debate rolling

The Johannesburg EcoMobility World Festival and Dialogues have received immense positive response and great feedback. The huge amount of media articles, TV shows and interviews indicate great interest in South Africa and globally.

Further information:

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