

# Key positions filled ahead of IPTS launch

Key appointments have been made in the lead up to the dry runs of Nelson Mandela Bay's long-awaited Integrated Public Transport System (IPTS).



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The dry runs are set to take place in two weeks, with metro officials saying the system is finally ready to take off.

To make this happen, the municipality has rehired top transport expert Keith Mitchell to assist in planning the city's transport network over the next three years.

Mitchell was also part of the consulting team for the IPTS between 2008 and 2010 when Port Elizabeth hosted Soccer World Cup games. He has since worked on the consulting teams for the City of Cape Town and City of Johannesburg Bus Rapid Transit systems.



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Mitchell steps in as deputy head of transport sector planning while three other key appointments have been made ahead of the IPTS dry runs starting on 21 November 2017.

The announcement was made at a roads and transport standing committee meeting this week.

Mitchell will work alongside director Siyabonga Somjaliso in planning the integration of the metro's transport system over the next three years.

## 35 out of 45 critical positions

So far, the city has filled 35 of the 45 critical positions for the IPTS.

The IPTS will also employ a total of 100 taxi drivers for its feeder taxis, 33 bus drivers, 29 conductors, six supervisors, security guards and CCTV camera operators.

Committee chairman Rano Kayser said the new appointments meant the city would save money that would otherwise have been spent on consultants.

"There are some positions that need to be filled. We did not fill all of them because we were looking for people who fit the criteria and are confident in terms of delivering services.

"All the people we have appointed are specialists in transport infrastructure, transport systems and development.

"We have appointed CCTV operators meaning the buses will be monitored inside and outside to ensure the safety of commuters on the buses," Kayser said.

In preparation for the dry run, the buses were moved from the Markman Industrial area to Cleary Park last week.

Initially, the IPTS was scheduled to be launched in October but it was delayed by a hung council meeting in September.



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Other appointments include Sihle Mjiwu and Sabatane Makwabe as project managers.

Lamla Fihla and Mitchell will come in as deputy heads.

Infrastructure and engineering executive director Walter Shaidi said the department was looking at beefing up appointments.

"Keith [Mitchell] is coming back with a wealth of experience.

"We have made a lot of mistakes and I am sure he can help us fill the gaps," Shaidi said.

"We were really impressed and we feel now that the IPTS is on the runway and it is about to take off."

Acting IPTS project manager Luthando Mabhoza said the IPTS had been pressured by the national Department of Transport to hire skilled transport specialists.

"Keith [Mitchell] is very experienced " he has assisted the City of Johannesburg and the City of Cape Town. He is well

versed and he knows the system," Mabhoza said.

*Source: Herald*

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