

Open Streets Main Road is back on 25 February

After such a successful event in October 2017, another Open Streets Day is planned for Cape Town along Main Road on Sunday, 25 February 2018.



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The aim will be to incorporate feedback and lessons learned the first time around, to further test the feasibility of a regular network of longer road closures. Share your feedback on the plans [here](#).

The idea of car-free streets has been tested in Cape Town as far back as 2003 – starting with a car-free festival on Klipfontein Road organised by the City of Cape Town and Western Cape Government – and in the past five years, Open Streets Days have become a fixture in the minds and hearts of Capetonians. The aim is to make it a fixed occurrence on the city's calendar.



How streets can help bridge social and spatial divides

Ilse van den Berg 26 May 2017



Next year, the Open Streets programme takes a leap into a new chapter to explore the long-term potential of the programme for Cape Town. Having tested the concept successfully in Langa, Mitchells Plain, the city centre, Observatory and Bellville, it is in discussions with city officials about ways to amplify the impact of this programme.

Thus far, discussions have focused on the impact the programme can have on existing plans by the [Transport and Urban Development Authority \(TDA\)](#) to encourage non-motorised transport use and transit-oriented development, and it expects to engage with other departments to explore synergies with other city policies too.

Accordingly, in the next six months, the organisation will be refining the model of a 5km closure, which was tested successfully at Open Streets Main Road on 1 October 2017. The Open Streets Main Road on 25 February 2018, will be along the same route, with a couple of tweaks to incorporate feedback and learnings from the first one, as well as a longer closure on Eisleben Road for Open Streets Mitchells Plain on 25 March 2018. Together, these build towards a network of regular car-free routes that enable and encourage people to change the way they use, perceive, and experience our city's streets.

Looking for partners

As for the smaller Open Streets Days (eg. on Bree Street, or King Langalibalele Drive in Langa), the organisation is looking for partners to help it fund them in the long term. In the next 12 months, it will be focusing on the extension of an Open Streets network while others come on board to help it continue growing the Open Streets programme at a more local level. The organisation is inviting people to reach out if they would like to sponsor an Open Streets Day in their neighbourhood.

Says the organisation in a statement: "We have learnt a lot in the past five years. In addition to the logistics and challenges of closing down a road, we have realised that for an Open Streets programme to succeed, we must celebrate and encourage a culture of public and street life. Of course, this doesn't happen overnight and many parties must play their role. The most important part of growing Open Streets will be public support and collaboration.

"Cape Town has developed a very thorough NMT strategy that acknowledges the importance of giving pedestrians, the majority of our population at any given time or space, priority in how they move and the options they have. The policies are there and through Open Streets we are testing an idea that might prompt action and active engagement from residents.

"Whether or not Open Streets can help transform how we move around the city is still to be determined, but one thing is clear: people like engaging with each other in shared public spaces, and strengthening these connections is a vital step in building a more resilient city that takes on challenges around transport, social development, climate change and more."

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