

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AS A KEY LEVER FOR TOWNSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Cities Support Programme (CSP) of National Treasury is a broad metropolitan municipality reform programme, that aims to capacitate South African cities through national and metro-level change interventions. The programme aims to support the growth and development of spatially inclusive, economically vibrant, cultural thriving and environmentally sustainable cities. The programme has a key focus on the competitiveness and integration of city economic spaces, including township economies. With CSP technical support, 5 metros – Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, eThekweni, Nelson Mandela Bay Metro and the City of Cape Town - are implementing township economy development strategies that contribute towards this vision of future cities.

Public transport has a central role in the township economies. In partnership with the 5 metros, the CSP TED programme has identified a range of strategic opportunities for enhancing public transport and leveraging investment in public transport to benefit the broader socio-economic environment, including opportunities for micro-enterprises. At the heart of these opportunities is the need to carry through strategic investments to improve road infrastructure, roll-out the bus rapid transport system, provide missing railway linkages, development NMT lanes and transform taxi ranks into multi-functional business and transport hubs. The township transport system must embrace a mixture of modes, including mini-bus taxis and local taxis and e-hailing. An integrated system would benefit consumers and contribute towards formalisation. It is also essential that we invest in universal access throughout transport system, recognising the needs of the vulnerable and disabled. Finally, public transport needs to be made much safer, and this requires better precinct management in hubs and nodes.