

JRA's plea as bridge rehabilitation starts



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he **Johannesburg Roads Agency** (JRA) – the City of Johannesburg's entity responsible for roads and storm water infrastructure – yesterday (Monday November 16) appealed to motorists to be "courteous and patient" as it embarked on two major projects to rehabilitate and repair bridges and related storm water infrastructure on the M1 freeway at a total cost R209.3-million.

One of the projects involves the rehabilitation of the Oxford Road and Federation Road bridges to be undertaken in three phases at a cost of R127.3-million, with the last phase expected to be completed by December 2016.

The other project is the R82-million repair work on the M1 overpass bridge between Carr and Anderson streets, which is expected to be completed by May 2017. The projects are part of the City's multibillion rand investment in roads and storm water infrastructure improvement to support economic growth in Johannesburg.

Speaking during a media briefing yesterday, Mpho Kau, JRA's Acting Managing Director, said the two projects would, as was to be expected, impact on traffic and motorists' travel times. Kau appealed to motorists to plan their trips with the traffic delays in mind and to use alternative routes to limit the impact.

"We appeal to all motorists to be courteous and patient during the construction process. The long-term benefits of a world-class M1 freeway bridge network will far outweigh the temporary inconvenience," said Kau.

Esther Schmidt, JRA's Operations Manager: Traffic Engineering, said closure times had been informed by traffic models and volume profiles undertaken by the entity.

"Planning your trip is essential to avoid the closures. We continuously monitor traffic and where necessary we will alter signal times to alleviate congestion. We expect delays of between 45 minutes and an hour in some cases. All delay times will be communicated through JRA and City platforms. An interactive map is available on the JRA website to help motorists plan their routes and make informed decisions," said Schmidt.

The Oxford Road and Federation Road project will result in the rehabilitation of both bridges, reconstruction of the 2km dual carriageway between Rockridge and Federation roads, stabilisation of the retaining walls and electrical works and replacement of the existing 3km storm water drainage system.

Phase one, which will run until 12 March 2016, will see the reduction in lane widths between Killarney and St Andrews streets. Phase Two will run from 13 March 2016 to 12 August 2016 and will result in the closure of the southbound carriageway between the two streets. Phase three will see the closure of the northbound carriageway between the two streets.

The Carr-Anderson streets project will include the rehabilitation and structural repairs to the double-deckers' asphalt surface, bridge parapets, expansion joints, bearings, concrete members in super- and sub-structures, drainage systems and road signage.

Kau said existing traffic patterns on both carriageways were such that work requiring lane closures would be scheduled at night and during off-peak periods.