

Roads and public works paving the way

Oliver Tambo project just one of many in progress

OLIVER Tambo paved the way to freedom, now his government is paving the way home. To commemorate the extraordinary life of Oliver Reginald Tambo, the road he travelled to his home village of Nkantolo, is being tarred for R168-million by the Eastern Cape department of roads and public works.

The completion date for the project has been set for June 2018.

It is hard to go anywhere in the Eastern Cape and not see roadworks. It's just action all the way. Something positive is being done to our difficult road network.

One of the most important projects is the enormous coastal corridor project so vital to the province's connectivity to the national grid.

so much easier and safer.

Look out for the two sections of this road on the R61 where phases 1 and 2 of the Magusheni-Mzamba route are gearing up for completion at a cost of an enormous R931-million later this year.



While the department looks ahead to the Tambo project, there is great excitement at the finalisation of the road home to Chris Hani's village, Sabalele, in Cofimvaba.

Project Sabalele, comprising 18km of fine tar, will be opened this month. The public will soon be able to motor smoothly right to the home village of this iconic South African struggle leader.

Turning to the Tambo project, the Eastern Cape department of roads and public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu said the contractor was appointed in May last year and the site handed over in July.

There are many layers to the department's work, but all eyes should be on the development of the Bisho Office Precinct.

This ambitious project will see the revitalisation of the Lennox Sebe regime's old apartheid-designed and dumped complex into a fine celebration of government in a free and democratic

Eastern Cape.

The department has made a special allocation of R255-million to the Bisho Office Precinct for the construction of roads and the acquisition of office buildings.

Smaller projects are being worked in detail too. For example, R156-million was spent on surfacing and paving the streets of Ugie and by June, the MEC should be on site cutting the ribbon.

There is also a smart emphasis on linking people to services by building or renovating roads. The R254-million road from Siphetu to the N2 will be finished later this year, and people are already using the road from Tombo to Isilimela Hospital, which was completed at a cost of R222-million in November.

Marawu also announced a little known fact: the province's R5-billion budget is actually double this when the South African National Roads Agency's (Sanral) R5-billion roadwork projects in the Eastern Cape are taken into account.

Sanral is funded nationally and the Eastern Cape is about the third-largest recipient of Sanral projects.

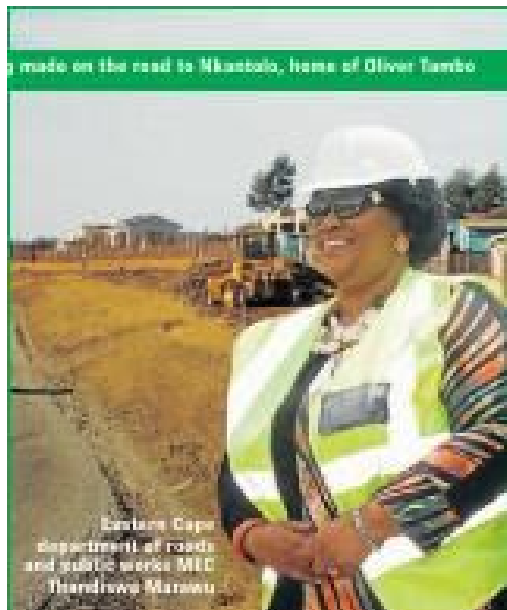
Marawu, delivering her 2017 policy speech, said: "We gather to pay tribute to Oliver Reginald Tambo, the longest-serving president of our movement, who would have been 100 years-old this year.

"This is the year we celebrate his extraordinary life and supreme contribution to our freedom.

"We honour his memory by pledging to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, to achieve his vision of a free, democratic and united society."

The MEC, giving the big money picture, explained that if you add the R2 258-million her department will be spending on transport infrastructure to Sanral's R5-billion, then R7.2-billion in total will be spent on roads in the Eastern Cape.

Of the province's R5-billion, R1.467-



Progress is being made on the road to Nkantolo, home of Oliver Tambo Eastern Cape department of roads and public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu

Segments of this fantastic road are being put together much like a multi-billion rand puzzle which will one day be revealed as a golden thread integrating the Eastern Cape with its wealthier neighbours of KwaZuluNatal and the Western Cape.

Business will flow and public access to homes in the Eastern Cape will be made

million will go to public works and R609million on administration.

The 2017-18 budget is up 9% (R414-million) from last year.

In her speech, Marawu also listed 14 new road projects as well as the many roads also currently being repaired.