

N3 toll road upgrades to be rolled out

12 January 2015 10:21 AM



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Jan 09 2015 12:27



Durban - A rehabilitation project on the N3 toll route between Harrismith and Warden will start in January 2015.

This 60km section will be reconstructed at a cost of R413m. The existing road surface in both directions will be reconstructed and will receive a new asphalt overlay.

Roadmac Surfacing has been contracted to perform the reconstruction, while SNA Consulting Engineers designed the project and will oversee the execution of the project.

It is expected to be completed by April 2017.

The N3 Toll Concession (N3TC) company said in a statement on Friday it is acutely aware of the disruption that road construction may cause to the free flow of traffic.

In order to limit inconvenience to road users, the company and its contractors have agreed to limit single lane closures in either direction for construction activity to 3km sections at a time.

There will, at all times, be at least one lane open to traffic to regulate the flow of traffic while construction is underway.

Careful consideration has been given to the time frames of the road works programme to ensure that all four lanes are open to traffic at peak times such as Easter and long weekends.

The N3 toll route between SA's inland provinces and the port of Durban is considered to be one of the country's most strategic freight and logistics corridors.

The N3TC manages a portion of the N3 between the Cedara interchange near Hilton and the Heidelberg South interchange, follows a tightly managed rehabilitation and expansion programme to ensure improved safety standards and service levels along this busy route.

N3TC's road rehabilitation management strategy determines the appropriate time for rehabilitation activities. As a result of high traffic volumes, this programme typically follows an eight-year cycle.

Roads carrying lower traffic volumes have a lifespan of almost double that number – approximately 15 years.

"We are committed to ensuring additional road capacity is added before traffic volumes increase to a level which may negatively impact on the safety, convenience and mobility of N3 toll route users," explains N3TC's Technical Manager, Douglas Judd.

Work on a R444m rehabilitation project commenced between Mooi River and Estcourt in 2013 and will be completed towards the end of 2015.

The left lane (or truck lane) is being rehabilitated and the project includes a new asphalt pavement surface to all lanes on this section.

Most complex project

The most complex of the three construction projects from Cedara to Tweedie near Howick will commence in August 2015.

This R400m expansion project, over 14km of the N3 toll route, should be completed within 24 months. Two additional traffic lanes, one in each direction, will be constructed in the existing median to increase the route's capacity in this high traffic zone; and the Umngeni River Bridge will be expanded as part of this project.

As with the other construction projects, a comprehensive traffic management programme will be put in place to minimise disruption and inconvenience to road users. As construction will be taking place in the median, N3TC will ensure that the flow of traffic is not compromised.

This multi-million rand investment will be funded by N3TC with no additional tolling required.

From <<http://www.fin24.com/Economy/N3-toll-road-upgrades-to-be-rolled-out-20150109>>