



CITY COUNCIL'S OFFER TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR CAPE TOWN'S COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE

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The City Council's offer to accept responsibility for Cape Town's Commuter rail service is to be welcomed but it is a huge challenge and the City does not yet have the skills in place to manage the system.

It has been clear for some time that Metrorail is not winning and the service is declining, so the City had no option but to step in.

The City has wisely decided that any takeover, if approved at national level, would have to take place in stages.

The first stage should be to stop the vandalism and the copper theft and this is something the City is well equipped to do. Its Copperheads anti-metal theft unit has performed well and has a good understanding of the problem. I see no reason why the Metro Police, working with the Copperheads, cannot arrest the ongoing destruction of trainset, the signals system and other infrastructure.

It's obvious to any observer that the trains are not well looked after or properly guarded at night and at weekends. The proof is in the ugly graffiti that defaces the coaches. This vandalism can only be done in daylight or under lights so it should be easy to spot the culprits. The graffiti advertises to the copper thieves that the trainsets are easy targets.

This is the starting point. It's known as the broken window theory and has been proven over and over again. Examples are the clean-up of New York under Mayor Rudy Giuliani and it's been one of the first things the City Improvement District did when it successfully tackled the crime and grime problem in the CBD.

This would make a visible difference and it would be the first step in winning back public support for the service.

We would also like to see some kind of partnership with the private sector. We need to get people with knowledge, skills and resources involved in a partnership to rebuild the service and grow it into the kind of public transport system Cape Town deserves.

Janine Myburgh

President of the Cape Chamber



CAPE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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