

Prasa prioritises full recovery of commuter rail services

The Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) has reiterated that the full recovery of commuter rail services nationally is a top priority. "Considerable progress has been made in restoring commuter services nationally, with 18 corridors recovered nationally, and 16 corridors prioritised for recovery in this financial year," Prasa said on Friday.



Source: Alexas_Fotos via [Pixabay](#)

Eight lines have been recovered in the Western Cape region, with six of these lines in operation with the new Electric Motor Units, otherwise known as Isitimela Sabantu.

Trains are running on the Central, Southern and Northern corridors, stopping at 88 stations out of 121 stations in the province.

Five corridors in the Western Cape have been earmarked for recovery in this financial year - Nyanga to Philippi; Philippi to Chris Hani; and Philippi to Kapteinsklop; Bellville to Strand; and Cape Town to Muldersvlei.

"We are making steady progress in recovering these lines. PRASA's interventions to restore and sustain urban passenger rail services aim to ensure that the return of passenger rail to the city is sustainable.

"The plans are part of PRASA's wider strategy to improve passenger rail services across South Africa and make rail a safe, reliable, and affordable mode of transport," the agency said.

The plans to improve passenger train services for the City of Cape Town include:

- Increasing the number of trains running on the Cape Town rail network.
- Improving the frequency of trains, through the recovery of signalling.
- Upgrading of train stations.
- Building on the gains in the safety and security of passengers by investing in security and facilities management.

In line with its secondary mandate, Prasa has already contributed to the socio-economic fabric of the mother city with the new multi-use development at the Cape Town Station.

"Together with improvements in the train service, these activities will improve the quality of life for commuters in the city, create jobs, and boost the city's economy.

"The number of reopened lines and those earmarked for reopening tells the story of solid progress in returning passenger rail to its rightful place as the backbone of public transport in the Western Cape.

"Residents of the city have welcomed the return of the services on several lines, including parts of the all-important Central Line. The recovery and rebuild programme is a priority that Prasa has shared with its stakeholders including parliamentary committees that we have been invited to," the agency said.

Prasa expressed confidence that it will deliver on its plans given its turnaround momentum.

The latest StatsSA Land Transport survey shows continued strong demand for passenger rail transport.

According to the latest Stats SA Land Transport Survey, the year-on-year demand for passenger services, albeit from a low base, increased by 215% year-on-year.

"Our On-Time performance and Customer Satisfaction Index show gradual improvement. Prasa attends regular meetings at which developments that affect the delivery of train services in Cape Town are discussed.

"These meetings align with the provisions of the National Land Transport Act (NLTA) and are designed to keep the City and the Province informed of developments within Prasa. Prasa reiterates its plans and programmes to revitalize passenger train services in Cape Town at these meetings," the agency said.

The Railway Steering Sub Committee meetings, a structure set up in terms of the National Land Transport Act (NLTA), provide a platform for regular updates on the state of the service.

Prasa, the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Departments of Infrastructure and Mobility are also members of an intergovernmental structure for relocating illegal occupants on the Central Line.

Prasa said it will continue to work closely with the City of Cape Town and the Provincial Government during its infrastructure and services rebuild and recovery.

"Prasa believes that the shared goal with the city of fully restoring the rail network and train services should remain the top priority between the two entities. Through the various intergovernmental structures and committees, we have full confidence in mutual cooperation and collaboration we share with the City of Cape Town and Western Cape Government for us to deliver on our promises to restore passenger rail services in the province," Prasa said.