



*The big smoke
Smoke from coal
braziers create an
unhealthy haze.
Mielie sellers gather
to light their bra-
ziers in downtow-
n Johannesburg.*

money well spent says Jo'burg

Johannesburg could spend up to R65-million on hosting the 70 000 visitors expected to attend the fortnight-long World Summit on Sustainable Development. Many residents wonder whether this is appropriate use of city resources. All that money on a jamboree for foreign visitors? The summit benefits Johannesburg in a great many ways, says the head of media liaison for the city, Tasneem Carrim, who lists five reasons why it will boost the city's economy:

- 1** Much of the world's media will focus on the summit during the critical fortnight, which will raise the city's international profile. This will have long-term benefits for investment and tourism. There are plenty of precedents, such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup, to confirm the power of a single, large international event to put a city on the world map.
- 2** The arrival of 70 000 visitors, all armed with foreign exchange, will have huge benefits for retail in the city – everything from taxis to restaurants, curio shops, museums, Internet cafes and entertainment venues.
- 3** The summit has provided a catalyst for much-needed upgrades to city infrastructure. Most of these upgrade projects were already in the pipeline – but it required the urgency of the summit deadline to speed along their execution.
- 4** New businesses have been established to organise the summit, for example the Johannesburg World Summit Company, thus creating employment. The infrastructure upgrades have created new opportunities to employ the city's poor: building roads, digging trenches for drains and clearing away waste to make way for green areas.
- 5** The summit has helped focus the local public on issues of sustainable development. There is now a far more widespread understanding that sustainability has relevance to our daily lives.

How exactly is the city spending the R65-million? These are some examples:

- Construction of new roads will cost R4,75-million. The widening of Sandton's roads, for example, will have immediate benefits for the tens of thousands of commuters stuck in traffic jams each morning.
- Major repairs have been done to sewers in the neighbourhood of key summit venues to cope with the massive population influx. The sewer upgrades will benefit residents of Sandton, where the population has exploded way beyond the limits of existing infrastructure.
- City Power has increased lighting in problem areas at a cost of R220 000.
- Metrobus will be providing R4,2-million worth of new buses (plus R300 000 worth of management).
- The metropolitan police will work overtime to ensure maximum service. This will cost R4-million in overtime pay.
- Ambulance and fire services will also be on constant stand-by, which will mean an overtime bill of R2,5-million.
- Pikitup staff will work R750 000 worth of overtime. Pikitup also expects to spend R2,1-million in regular operations, plus another R2-million on recycling.
- Parks that will be improved include Masupha/Ben Naude in Diepkloof, at a cost of R805 000; Van Onselen in Meadlowlands West (R690 000); Marlboro Drive and Rivonia Road in Sandton, at R200 000 each; and Katherine Street, also in Sandton, for R105 000.
- The budget for upgrading the historic Turbine Hall in Newtown, where some summit activities will be held, is R5-million.
- Johannesburg Roads Agency allotted R1,5-million to upgrading traffic lights last year, plus another half million for this year. Some R750 000 has been spent on road markings; another R650 000 is budgeted.
- R1,4-million will be spent on environmental issues, which includes health inspections at all accommodation and leisure venues.

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