

STABILISATION OF GROOT MARICO BRIDGE UNDERWAY

Bakwena Platinum Corridor Concessionaire (Bakwena) has introduced traffic restrictions at the Groot Marico bridge on the N4 in North West Province as the structure undergoes extensive repairs.

Liam Clarke, Commercial Manager of Bakwena, says that the Marico river over the years silted up and flooded causing the silt to move. “This, in turn, compromised the bridge’s footing and led to a 150mm collapse of one section of the bridge.

“The first part of the reconstruction process, which commenced in August 2017, involves the erection of nine temporary load-bearing support columns to keep the bridge stable and the placement of jacks at the top of each column to allow the bridge to be jacked up to its original height.”

The next part of the process involves driving metal sheets down to the rock and pouring concrete and grout into the gap to reinforce the bridge’s foundation. Once this has been completed, the bridge will be jacked up to correct the road alignment.

Clarke says the original bridge was 7.5 metres wide. “We widened the bridge in 2002 by 5.1m to incorporate 2.5m metre shoulder for vehicles. This part of the road is safe for road users and we are operating a stop and go along this section to allow traffic through.”

He points out that repairs of the Groot Marico Bridge was unforeseen. “We conduct regular inspections along our roads and when we identified the flaw, we immediately set out to rectify it and bring it up to standard. This forms part of our strategy to keep road users safe at all times and ensure their journeys are as seamless as possible.

“We don’t want to end up with a situation like the one experienced in the United States where over 1 000 bridges are in dire need of repair, but the resources to do so are not readily available.”

Repairs to the bridge are expected to take several months to complete and Bakwena thanks motorists for their patience during this time