



SERVICE DELIVERY PARTY
POLICY WHITE PAPER

Dassie

Building Cape Town's Integrated Zero-Tailpipe-Emission Transport Network by 2040

It's not a taxi, it's a Dassie.

A dassie, or rock hyrax, is a small and resourceful animal native to the Cape, able to thrive in difficult terrain through adaptability rather than size. The name reflects the ambition of this framework, to build something resilient and distinctly of this place out of capacity that already exists.

A comprehensive implementation framework for transforming the minibus taxi industry, integrating public transport and building a cleaner, safer and more productive Cape Town.

Dassie

Cape Town has a transport system that has never fully caught up with the city it has become. For decades, minibus taxis have carried millions of passengers through a network of routes that government did not create and could not easily replace. They emerged from a history of spatial exclusion, inadequate public transport and economic necessity.

They became one of the most important pieces of Cape Town's mobility system because they solved a problem that had to be solved. The policy question for 2026 is therefore this: how do we transform the capacity that already exists into a safer, cleaner, more professional and fully integrated public transport network?

Dassie is the answer. Dassie is a proposed City-led programme to transform Cape Town's minibus taxi network by 2040 through three simultaneous transformations. Electrification will transform the vehicle. Integration will transform the network. Professionalisation will transform the operator.

A dassie, formally the rock hyrax, is a small animal found across the Cape, well known for thriving in difficult terrain through resourcefulness rather than size. The name is used here deliberately. This framework is not about scale for its own sake. It is about building something resilient out of capacity that already exists.

The objective is for all taxis operating within the City's regulatory jurisdiction to become zero-tailpipe-emission vehicles by 2040, subject to the necessary legal, technical, financial and infrastructure arrangements. This will not be achieved through a simple ban on petrol and diesel vehicles. It will be achieved through a managed transition in which government provides the rules, infrastructure and financing architecture while existing operators remain productive participants in the system.

Dassie will establish:

- a clear regulatory and accreditation framework
- progressive zero-tailpipe-emission vehicle standards
- conversion pathways for suitable existing vehicles
- replacement pathways for vehicles that cannot be converted
- City-approved vehicle specifications
- charging and energy hubs across the network
- digital payment and passenger information systems
- CCTV and appropriate vehicle telematics

- a passenger rights framework
- operator performance accreditation
- financing mechanisms that separate battery risk from vehicle finance
- a guarantee facility to reduce the financing risk of electric taxi vehicles
- transparent data and governance arrangements
- integration with MyCiTi, rail and other public transport
- measurable safety, reliability and service standards

The result should not be a government-owned taxi industry. It should be a government-enabled public transport system in which private operators provide capacity within a clear public framework. Government does not have to own every part of a public service to make that public service work. It must establish the rules, infrastructure and incentives that allow every capable participant to contribute to a functioning system. That is the philosophy of Dassie.

The Vision and the Problem

1 The Problem We Are Actually Trying to Solve

Cape Town's transport system is the product of history. Apartheid separated people from economic opportunity through spatial planning. Townships were located far from employment centres. Formal public transport frequently failed to provide the flexibility, frequency or affordability required by growing communities.

People responded. Entrepreneurs built businesses around the gaps. The minibus taxi industry became one of the most important transport networks in the country.

That history should neither romanticise nor demonise the industry. The taxi industry has provided an essential service to millions of South Africans. It has also developed serious problems involving violence, route disputes, weak regulation, vehicle safety, driver conduct and fragmented governance. Both realities can be true.

The correct response is therefore neither to attack the industry nor to surrender the public interest to it. The correct response is to integrate it into a properly governed public transport system. The State must recognise the capacity that already exists while establishing clear rights and obligations.

The taxi industry deserves neither demonisation nor romanticisation. It should be recognised for the essential transport service it provides while being held to the same principle that applies to every participant in the public transport system: rights and obligations go together.

2 Learning from the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme

Any serious proposal for taxi industry transformation must confront South Africa's actual track record on this exact type of intervention. The national Taxi Recapitalisation Programme, launched in 1999 and relaunched in 2006, set out to scrap 135,894 old taxis through a cash allowance paid to operators who surrendered their vehicles.

More than two decades later, the programme has scrapped roughly 81,000 to 83,000 vehicles against that target, at a cost exceeding R5.6 billion in scrapping allowances alone. The cash allowance was consistently worth less than a vehicle's ongoing earning power on the informal market, and some scrapped vehicles have resurfaced on the road under new paperwork.

The lesson is structural, not merely about execution. A programme that pays an operator a fixed lump sum to give up an income-generating asset creates a permanent incentive to game the payout while keeping the asset working. Dassie does not repeat this design. It replaces a scrapping subsidy with an accreditation ladder and a conversion pathway that preserves the vehicle as a working asset, offering ongoing commercial value for continued participation rather than a one-off payment for surrender.

3 Dassie's Central Proposition

Dassie is not a programme to replace Cape Town's taxi industry. It is a programme to transform it. The taxi industry already possesses enormous transport capacity. Cape Town cannot afford to destroy that capacity and then attempt to recreate it through government-owned infrastructure alone. Instead, Dassie will build the system around the capacity that already exists.

Three transformations

Electrification transforms the vehicle. Petrol and diesel vehicles progressively become electric vehicles with lower operating costs, lower local air pollution and zero tailpipe emissions.

Integration transforms the network. Taxis become a deliberate component of the City's broader public transport architecture rather than a parallel system operating beside it.

Professionalisation transforms the operator. Operators and drivers become accountable participants in a transparent system with measurable standards, passenger protections and commercial incentives.

Government establishes the system. Private operators provide capacity. Passengers receive protection. Good performance is rewarded. Lawlessness is not tolerated.

The Operator Settlement

4 What Dassie Means for the Taxi Operator

Dassie must begin with a proposition that operators can understand. Government is not coming to take your business away. Government is offering a pathway to a modernised business.

An accredited operator should gain access to:

- vehicle replacement programmes
- approved electric vehicle conversions
- preferential financing structures
- charging infrastructure
- battery-as-a-service arrangements
- digital payment infrastructure
- route and demand information
- fleet management tools
- lower energy costs
- lower routine maintenance costs
- improved vehicle residual value
- commercial opportunities around Energy Hubs

In return, operators must accept obligations. These include lawful operating licences, roadworthy vehicles, properly licensed and trained drivers, passenger safety standards and transparent fares. They also include appropriate insurance, digital identification, CCTV where required, vehicle telematics and compliance with passenger rights, safety monitoring, route conditions and lawful enforcement.

Rights and obligations must travel together.

5 The Regulatory Architecture

Dassie must not create a parallel transport bureaucracy. It should build on the legal architecture already emerging under the amended National Land Transport Act. The amended Act provides for Municipal Regulatory Entities and gives a municipality to

which the operating licensing function has been assigned responsibility for services operating wholly within its jurisdiction. It also links licensing decisions to integrated transport planning.

Dassie should therefore operate through five distinct layers.

Layer 1: Planning. The City's Integrated Transport Plan determines what transport capacity the city needs, where it needs it and how different modes should interact.

Layer 2: Regulation. The competent regulatory entity issues and manages operating licences in accordance with the law. Where Cape Town has the relevant municipal regulatory powers, these should be exercised through a properly constituted and professionally staffed Municipal Regulatory Entity. Where functions remain with the Western Cape or national authorities, Dassie must operate cooperatively within those jurisdictions.

Layer 3: Dassie Accreditation. Accreditation is not a substitute for an operating licence. It is a performance framework sitting above basic legal compliance.

Layer 4: Contracting and Incentives. The City uses lawful contracts, concessions, procurement mechanisms, incentives and commercial partnerships to reward operators that meet higher standards.

Layer 5: Enforcement. Safety, licensing, route compliance and criminal law remain matters for the competent authorities. Dassie does not negotiate away the law.

6 The Operator Principle

One of the most important design principles is that Dassie regulates operators, not associations. Taxi associations should have a legitimate role in consultation, representation and industry dialogue. They should not control individual operating licences, vehicle accreditation, access to finance, charging access, vehicle approvals, passenger complaints, enforcement decisions, data access or commercial concessions.

The legal operator must remain identifiable. The individual operator must have a direct relationship with the regulatory system. Associations can represent their members. They cannot become a substitute for the State.

Dassie recognises lawful operators and lawful operating licences, not territorial ownership of the transport system by associations.

This distinction is essential if Dassie is to modernise the industry without reproducing the governance weaknesses that have historically surrounded it.

Accreditation and the Passenger

7 Accreditation: Bronze, Silver and Gold

Dassie will establish a progressive performance ladder.

Bronze

The entry level. Requirements include a valid operating licence, a roadworthy vehicle, a licensed driver, required insurance, basic passenger safety, required identification and basic compliance with Dassie standards.

Silver

Higher operational performance. Potential requirements include a strong safety record, reliable vehicle availability, digital payments, functioning telematics, passenger complaint resolution, driver training and improved environmental performance.

Gold

Best-in-class performance. Requirements could include sustained safety performance, high service reliability, excellent passenger feedback, full digital integration, advanced fleet monitoring, electric fleet performance and driver welfare and training standards.

Accreditation should be measured against rolling performance periods rather than vague claims of flawless performance. The system should also reward higher performance commercially. Silver and Gold operators could receive preferential financing rates, reduced accreditation fees, priority access to new infrastructure, preferred access to commercial contracts, lower guarantee requirements and preferential Energy Hub services. The objective is to make good behaviour economically rational.

8 The Passenger Charter

Dassie cannot be designed solely around operators. The passenger is the ultimate customer. Every accredited Dassie service should be governed by a Passenger Charter guaranteeing the right to a safe vehicle, a properly licensed driver, a roadworthy vehicle, transparent fares and a receipt where requested.

It should also guarantee the right to lodge a complaint, protection from discrimination, reasonable accessibility, route and fare information, and appropriate protection of personal data.

The amended National Land Transport Act already provides for complaints and enquiries through municipal integrated public transport arrangements. Dassie should turn that principle into a visible, accessible passenger service. A passenger should not need to know which association operates a taxi in order to know where to complain.

The Vehicle Transition

9 The 2040 Vehicle Transition

The transition must be predictable. Operators will not invest hundreds of thousands of rand into vehicles if government changes the rules every few years. Dassie therefore establishes a long-term pathway.

2027 to 2030: Build and prove

Establish governance and the regulatory framework, finalise technical specifications and launch Dassie 100. Develop Energy Hubs, establish financing mechanisms, and test battery leasing, vehicle conversion, digital payment architecture and passenger information and telematics.

2030 to 2035: Accelerate

From a defined date, subject to demonstrated technical and financial readiness, all new replacement vehicles entering the Dassie system should be zero-tailpipe-emission vehicles. Existing internal combustion vehicles remain subject to progressively tighter age, safety and operating requirements.

2035 to 2040: Complete

The permitted age and emissions profile of the remaining combustion fleet is progressively tightened. By 2040, 100 percent of taxis within Dassie's defined regulatory scope should be zero-tailpipe-emission vehicles. The precise interim fleet percentages should be determined through the pilot and fleet modelling rather than invented in advance.

10 Conversion or Replacement

Dassie provides two pathways.

Pathway A: Conversion

A vehicle may qualify for an approved electric conversion if it is within the permitted age range, passes a comprehensive structural inspection and has a suitable chassis. The conversion must meet national vehicle standards, the battery and electrical systems must meet safety requirements, the conversion must be properly homologated and appropriate warranties must be provided.

Roadworthiness alone is not enough. A roadworthy certificate confirms basic road safety. DASSIE must establish a more comprehensive technical assessment for vehicles being converted.

Pathway B: Replacement

Vehicles unsuitable for conversion enter a structured replacement programme. The operator purchases or finances a City-approved vehicle meeting DASSIE specifications. The City should not select a single favoured manufacturer. Instead, it should define outcome-based specifications covering passenger capacity, safety, battery safety, range, charging compatibility, braking, structural integrity, accessibility, CCTV, telematics, warranty, repairability, cybersecurity and environmental performance. Any manufacturer capable of meeting those specifications should be able to compete.

11 The Electric Vehicle Specification

The DASSIE vehicle should not merely be an electric version of today's taxi. It should be a purpose-designed public transport asset. Every approved vehicle should provide sufficient real-world range for its operating pattern, rapid or appropriate opportunity charging, battery safety and fire protection.

It should also provide regenerative braking, CCTV capability, driver monitoring where justified, passenger information, digital payment compatibility, GPS and telematics, accessible emergency systems, secure data connectivity, robust suspension and body construction, commercially viable warranties and repair and parts support.

The specification should also provide for multiple manufacturers. DASSIE should create an ecosystem, not a monopoly.

Financing the Battery and the Loan

12 Battery-as-a-Service

The most difficult financial problem is not necessarily the electric motor. It is the battery. The financing annex proposes a powerful solution: separate the battery from the vehicle so that the operator finances the glider while the battery is financed through a dedicated Battery Fund and provided as a metered service.

The concept should be retained, but its legal and financial structure should remain subject to proper financial, procurement and Treasury due diligence.

The Battery Fund carries the risk nobody has yet priced. The Guarantee Facility de-risks the loan everybody already understands.

Under the model, the Battery Fund owns the battery and the operator finances the vehicle. The operator pays for battery use through a usage-based charge. Battery performance is monitored, degradation is managed and batteries can potentially be repurposed for stationary storage, capturing residual value across the battery's full life.

The financing annex proposes second-life use when batteries fall below the performance required for taxi duty, potentially around 70 percent to 80 percent of original capacity. That should become an important part of the Energy Hub business model.

13 Do Not Mandate Identical Batteries

The original financing concept proposes physical and electrical interchangeability between battery packs. The better solution is interoperability rather than identical batteries.

Dassie should establish common standards for safety, electrical interfaces, communication protocols, diagnostics, battery health data, charging, mounting, identification and cybersecurity. Approved manufacturers should be able to compete within those standards. This preserves competition while allowing the Battery Fund to manage residual value intelligently.

14 The Dassie Guarantee Facility

The second half of the financing architecture is a guarantee facility. The operator's vehicle loan should be as close as possible to a conventional vehicle finance product. The guarantee does not need to guarantee the entire vehicle. It should provide a defined first-loss credit enhancement against an electric taxi loan portfolio.

The financing annex proposes a DBSA-anchored facility with an initial first-loss exposure in the region of 10 percent to 20 percent, followed by a declining guarantee as real performance data accumulates. That principle should remain.

However, the final financial close must specify whether the guarantee covers principal or defined losses, the attachment point, the exhaustion point, the annual and lifetime guarantee caps, recovery obligations, repossession rules, the claims process, pricing and the taper schedule.

DBSA already has demonstrated experience financing minibus taxi assets, including a R500 million facility supporting taxi finance through SA Taxi. That does not make DBSA a committed Dassie financier. It does, however, demonstrate that the proposed financing conversation is grounded in an existing institutional capability.

15 No Association Mediation of Debt Recovery

One weakness in the original financing annex should be removed. A lender's repossession rights should not depend upon mediation with taxi associations. Commercial recovery disputes must remain commercial recovery disputes.

Where route violence or unlawful interference affects an operator's ability to operate, the State must address that through the appropriate regulatory, policing and judicial mechanisms. Dassie should never create a system in which an association can delay or prevent legitimate financial enforcement. This protects lenders, taxpayers, compliant operators and the integrity of the guarantee facility.

16 The Battery Fund's Legal Form

The Battery Fund should not be predetermined as a simple City sub-account. The final structure should be selected after legal and financial due diligence. Possible structures could include a ring-fenced municipal facility, a development-finance

vehicle, a special-purpose vehicle or a blended structure involving public and private capital.

The decisive requirements are ring-fencing, transparency, independent governance and clear risk allocation, together with audited accounts, procurement compliance, appropriate Treasury approvals and protection against political interference.

Municipal procurement must remain consistent with the constitutional requirement for procurement to be fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective. No Dassie financing mechanism should be used to circumvent procurement law.

Energy Infrastructure

17 Energy Hubs

The electric taxi fleet requires an energy system. Dassie therefore creates Energy Hubs at major taxi ranks, interchanges and strategically selected locations.

Each hub can combine grid connection, high-capacity chargers, solar generation and battery storage with managed charging. It can also provide driver facilities, passenger facilities, digital payment, retail, maintenance, battery second-life storage and commercial concessions.

The Energy Hub becomes more than a charging station. It becomes a piece of urban infrastructure.

18 Managing the Electricity Demand

A fleet of thousands of electric taxis will create substantial electricity demand. That demand must not be wished away. A planning assumption of 50.8 kWh per taxi per day would imply roughly 457 MWh of daily energy for 9,000 vehicles before charging losses.

The actual system requirement depends heavily on when vehicles charge. The same daily energy can produce very different peak loads depending on whether charging is distributed over twelve hours or concentrated into four. Dassie must therefore model four separate quantities: total energy consumption in MWh per day, the coincident peak MW occurring at the same time, the installed charger MW representing theoretical capacity, and the grid connection MW actually required at each site.

The objective is not simply to build the biggest possible charging network. It is to build a managed charging network. Charging should respond to taxi schedules, route requirements, electricity tariffs, grid constraints, solar availability, battery storage, Energy Hub demand and system emergencies. Electric taxis should become a flexible electricity customer rather than an unmanaged new peak.

19 Solar, Storage and the Grid

Dassie should encourage Energy Hubs to combine grid electricity, solar generation, battery storage and managed charging. The City should investigate wheeling, distributed generation, storage and appropriate electricity tariff structures where

legally and commercially feasible.

The goal is not to pretend that electrification has no grid implications. It does. The goal is to turn those implications into a managed infrastructure investment.

Cape Town is already beginning this transition in its municipal fleet. The City has introduced its first fully electric MyCiTi bus and ordered 38 battery-electric buses, with deliveries scheduled through March 2027. Dassie extends that transformation from the City's fleet into the much larger flexible taxi network.

Digital Systems and People

20 Digital Payments

Every DASSIE taxi should progressively support cash, bank cards, tap-to-pay, QR payments and digital transport wallets. Cash should remain available during the transition so that digitalisation does not become exclusion.

The long-term objective is a common transport payment ecosystem across taxis, MyCiTi, rail, future BRT and other participating public transport operators. A passenger should eventually be able to move across Cape Town's transport system without needing to understand which institution owns which mode.

21 CCTV, Telematics and Data

Every DASSIE vehicle should progressively become a connected transport asset. Appropriate systems should include GPS, vehicle diagnostics, safety event recording, CCTV, driver identification, emergency communication and passenger counting where appropriate.

However, technology must not become uncontrolled surveillance. DASSIE must establish strict rules governing who may access data, when data may be accessed, retention periods, law-enforcement access, passenger privacy, driver privacy, cybersecurity and audit trails. POPIA compliance must be built into the architecture from the beginning.

22 Driver Professionalisation

The vehicle can be electric while the system remains dysfunctional. DASSIE therefore treats the driver as a central part of the transformation. Drivers should receive training covering electric vehicle operation, energy-efficient driving, passenger safety, disability awareness, conflict management, emergency procedures, digital payment systems, basic vehicle diagnostics and fatigue awareness.

Driver welfare also matters. A professional transport system cannot depend on drivers operating for excessive hours simply to survive. DASSIE should therefore investigate appropriate standards for rest, working time and driver welfare while recognising the different ownership and employment structures within the taxi industry.

Network Integration

23 Integration with MyCiTi and Rail

Dassie is not intended to make every taxi route compete directly with every bus route. The objective is network optimisation. Taxis can perform functions that large buses cannot perform efficiently, including first-mile and last-mile transport, feeder services, off-peak and flexible services, high-frequency local connections and links to rail and BRT stations.

MyCiTi provides high-capacity trunk infrastructure. Rail can provide high-volume corridor movement where functioning. Taxis provide flexibility and distribution. The objective is to make these systems work as one network.

24 Route Rationalisation

Dassie should establish a data-driven route planning programme. For every major route, the City should know passenger demand, peak demand, vehicle utilisation, journey times, competing routes, BRT and rail availability, transfer opportunities, operating costs and safety performance.

The answer should not always be more taxis. Nor should it always be replace taxis with buses. The answer should be whatever combination provides the best public transport outcome.

25 Dassie 100

Before attempting to transform thousands of vehicles, Dassie should establish a controlled pilot. Dassie 100 would place 100 electric taxis across a representative selection of Cape Town routes.

The pilot should deliberately include different distances, gradients, passenger loads, income areas, operating patterns, charging conditions and traffic conditions. It should measure energy consumption, charging time, battery degradation, maintenance, downtime, driver behaviour, passenger acceptance, financing performance, insurance costs, accident rates, operating costs and fare implications.

The pilot then expands to 500 vehicles, then 2,000. Only once the evidence supports scale should the full fleet transition accelerate.

The Economics of Transition

26 Financing the Transition

The capital assumptions in the financing annex illustrate the problem. It estimates a diesel Quantum at approximately R444,000 compared with an electric equivalent of roughly R650,000 to R670,000, leaving an indicative capital gap of around R200,000 to R230,000. These should be treated as modelling assumptions rather than fixed 2026 market prices until independently validated through procurement and market testing.

The important point is structural. The electric taxi may have lower operating costs while still being harder to finance. That is precisely why Dassie needs financial engineering rather than simply demanding that operators absorb the difference.

27 The Finance Stack

Dassie should build a layered financing structure. The operator retains meaningful ownership and financial exposure through an operator contribution, and finances the vehicle itself through commercial vehicle finance. The battery is financed separately through the Battery Fund.

A development-finance institution provides defined credit enhancement through the Guarantee Facility. Manufacturers can provide warranties, residual-value commitments or other forms of risk sharing. Institutions such as DBSA can provide appropriate catalytic development finance. Once the model demonstrates predictable performance, private capital should progressively assume more of the risk.

The ultimate objective is not permanent subsidy. It is market creation.

28 The Guarantee Taper

Government should not guarantee electric taxis forever. The guarantee should be highest when uncertainty is highest. As the loan book produces real data, default rates, residual values, battery degradation, maintenance costs, insurance costs and resale values all become known.

The guarantee can then decline. The ideal end state is a commercially financeable electric taxi market that no longer requires substantial public credit enhancement.

29 The Commercial Opportunity

Dassie should not view electrification as a cost alone. It creates an entirely new economic ecosystem. Energy Hubs can support charging, vehicle maintenance, battery servicing and battery second-life storage alongside food retail, driver services, digital payment services, advertising, small businesses, solar generation and energy storage.

The taxi industry becomes part of a new urban energy economy. This creates opportunities for Cape Town-based entrepreneurs rather than simply turning the City into a buyer of foreign technology.

30 Local Industrial Development

Cape Town should seek to capture as much local economic value as realistically possible. This could include vehicle assembly, conversion centres, battery servicing, software, charging equipment, electrical contracting, maintenance, driver training, data services, recycling and second-life battery applications.

However, local-content requirements must not become a disguised protection racket or force the City to buy inferior or excessively expensive equipment. The principle should be to build local capability while preserving competitive procurement.

Governance and Accountability

31 Safety and the Rule of Law

Dassie is not a concession to lawlessness. The transformation will only work if the State is prepared to enforce the rules. No operator should receive benefits because of intimidation. No association should receive regulatory privileges because it can shut down a route. No route should be treated as private territory.

Violence, extortion, intimidation and unlawful obstruction remain matters for the law. Dassie can provide a structured industry forum for consultation. It cannot become a parallel dispute-resolution system that overrides the State.

32 Governance

Dassie should be governed through a dedicated programme office accountable to the City. Its governance structure should include representation from City government, the Western Cape Government, transport regulators, operators and passenger representatives.

It should also include financial institutions, development-finance institutions, energy specialists, vehicle manufacturers, labour representatives, safety experts and technical specialists. Representation does not mean regulatory control. The City remains accountable for the public system.

33 Transparency and Anti-Corruption

Dassie will involve large procurement contracts, infrastructure investment and potentially billions of rand in vehicle finance. Its credibility will depend on transparency.

The programme should publish procurement principles, vehicle specifications, accreditation criteria, financing rules and aggregate performance data. It should also publish charging tariffs, guarantee performance, safety statistics, passenger complaints, contract awards, conflicts of interest and annual independent audit findings.

No manufacturer should be guaranteed a market. No association should receive preferential access. No political office-bearer should be able to intervene in individual licensing or financing decisions.

Implementation

34 The Implementation Roadmap

2027: Build the architecture

Establish the Dassie programme office, confirm legal authority and establish the regulatory framework. Finalise technical standards and launch Dassie 100. Begin Energy Hub design, commence finance negotiations, and establish the passenger charter and data governance.

2028: Prove the model

Expand the pilot and begin the conversion programme. Launch the first Energy Hubs and the digital payment platform. Finalise the Battery Fund, establish the Guarantee Facility and publish first performance data.

2029: Scale

Expand the electric fleet and the charging network. Establish the vehicle supply framework, begin structured operator finance and integrate taxi data with transport planning.

2030: Make the transition irreversible

Subject to demonstrated technical and financial readiness, all new replacement vehicles entering the Dassie system should be zero-tailpipe-emission.

2031 to 2035: Accelerate

Large-scale fleet replacement, Energy Hub expansion and the battery second-life programme all proceed together, alongside stronger integration with BRT and rail and progressively tighter combustion vehicle standards.

2035 to 2040: Complete

Accelerate the retirement of remaining combustion vehicles, expand the zero-emission charging network and complete network integration, achieving a 100 percent zero-tailpipe-emission taxi fleet within Dassie's defined scope by 2040.

35 The 2040 City

Imagine Cape Town in 2040. A passenger leaves home in Khayelitsha. A neighbourhood electric taxi takes her to a major interchange. She transfers seamlessly to rapid public transport. She pays digitally, and her journey is visible on a single transport platform.

The taxi is charged at an Energy Hub powered by a combination of grid electricity, solar generation and stored energy. The vehicle is maintained by a local business. The battery eventually leaves taxi service and enters stationary storage.

The operator has access to predictable finance. The driver has professional training. The passenger has somewhere to complain if something goes wrong. The City knows where demand exists and can adjust the network accordingly.

Nobody had to destroy the taxi industry to build that system. We built the system around it.

The Settlement

36 What Dassie Is Not

Dassie is not a taxi ban, a government takeover of the taxi industry, a subsidy for poor performance or a reward for association power. It is not a single-manufacturer procurement programme or a promise of unlimited public guarantees.

It is not a replacement for MyCiTi or for rail. It is not an excuse to ignore the grid, and it is not an excuse to ignore the rule of law. Dassie is a structured transition.

37 The Measures of Success

Dassie should be judged by outcomes rather than announcements. By 2040, Cape Town should be able to demonstrate progress across four areas.

Passenger outcomes

Shorter waiting times, safer journeys, reliable services, transparent fares, easier transfers and improved accessibility.

Operator outcomes

Lower energy costs, lower maintenance costs, predictable finance, improved asset values and professionalised operations.

City outcomes

Integrated transport planning, better network data, reduced local air pollution, reduced dependence on diesel, more resilient public transport and stronger economic participation.

Environmental outcomes

Zero tailpipe emissions from the Dassie fleet, progressive reduction in lifecycle emissions as electricity supply decarbonises, and greater use of renewable energy and storage.

The distinction matters, and it should be stated honestly. Electric vehicles are zero tailpipe emission vehicles. They are not automatically zero lifecycle carbon vehicles, particularly on a coal-heavy electricity system. South Africa's grid remains roughly 83

percent coal-fired, and on today's grid mix an electric minibus taxi is estimated to produce lifecycle emissions in the order of 14 percent higher than an equivalent diesel vehicle, once upstream generation emissions are counted.

This does not undermine the case for DASSIE. The near-term case rests on eliminated tailpipe particulates, reduced noise and improved urban air quality in dense corridors, benefits that accrue immediately regardless of the grid mix. The climate case strengthens automatically as Eskom's generation mix decarbonises. DASSIE should measure both figures honestly rather than presenting only the one that is more flattering.

38 The Final Settlement

The most important part of DASSIE is not the battery. It is not the charger. It is not the taxi. It is the institutional settlement.

For decades, government and the taxi industry have often approached one another as opposing forces. DASSIE proposes something different. Government says: we recognise the capacity you have built. The taxi industry says: we are prepared to operate within a transparent public framework.

Passengers say: we expect safety, dignity and reliable service. Financial institutions say: we will finance the transition if the risks are properly structured. Manufacturers say: we will compete to supply the vehicles and technology. The City says: we will build the infrastructure, establish the rules and enforce them fairly.

That is how a transport system is built.

39 The DASSIE Principle

DASSIE rests on one fundamental idea.

Government does not have to own every part of a public service to make the public service work. It must establish the rules, infrastructure and incentives that allow every capable participant to contribute to a functioning system.

The taxi industry did not create Cape Town's transport problem. It grew around it. For decades, South Africans have built informal systems because formal systems were insufficient.

The task of the next generation of government is not to destroy the capacity people built to survive. It is to turn that capacity into infrastructure for prosperity. Apartheid created many of the gaps. South Africans created businesses and networks to fill them.

Dassie is about government finally building the system around the people who have been keeping it moving.

CONCLUSION

Dassie 2040

Electrification transforms the vehicle. Integration transforms the network. Professionalisation transforms the operator. Infrastructure transforms the economics. Data transforms the way the city manages demand. Finance transforms what is possible.

The taxi industry will have rights within Cape Town's public transport system. It will also have obligations.

No association will own the system. No operator will be above the law. No passenger will be below its protection.

Dassie is not about getting rid of the taxi industry. It is about turning one of Cape Town's greatest existing transport assets into one of its greatest public infrastructure systems.

Build the System. Electrify the Network. Professionalise the Industry. Unlock Cape Town's Potential.