

NEWS RELEASE

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GAUTRAIN OPENS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND IN TIME FOR THE WORLD CUP

This week saw the opening of the initial phase of Gautrain in Johannesburg, South Africa's first high speed modern rail line, just three days before footballers appear at the new Soccer City stadium in Soweto to kick off Africa's first World Cup

Atkins are responsible for the design of the Gautrain scheme and have been working on the project for an international consortium since 2005. The project is the biggest civil engineering project in Africa as well as the largest underground railway presently under construction in the southern hemisphere. Atkins was responsible for the design of 15km of new tunnels beneath central Johannesburg, three new underground stations, a new tunnel portal at Marlboro, seven emergency intervention shafts, designs for the permanent way and alignment for the entire route.

Prior to Gautrain, World Cup visitors would have had to travel on the congested highways from the airport to the city centre, and estimates suggest that between 5,000 and 6,500 passengers per direction per day in the peak period of the World Cup will now choose to use this alternative route. For 100 rand, or 10 euros, World Cup visitors will be able to ride the 15km from the airport to the Sandton hotel district in less than 15 minutes.

Tom O'Malley, Atkins Ireland Managing Director commented: "This project showcases Atkins' ability to successfully provide a full multidisciplinary service under a tight schedule whilst finding innovative solutions for technical challenges that were simple and direct – always the most difficult goal to score."

The project has had to overcome many unusual challenges, including the availability of local materials, employment laws, ground conditions and budget restraints, and this sets it apart from infrastructure projects elsewhere in the world. In keeping with the all round ground breaking nature of the project, Atkins developed an innovative and low carbon ventilation approach to alleviate the need to air condition public spaces within the underground stations. This approach will deliver a carbon emission saving of 9,200 tons per annum.

Atkins' project director, Steve Tasker, commented; "Despite the engineering challenges involved the initial segment has been completed ahead of schedule and in time for the World Cup, which is a great achievement for both Atkins and the consortium, and great news for the World Cup. Our successful work on this international project, with its many challenges, highlights Atkins' technical excellence in this area".

The initial services available for the World Cup include a train service linking stations at Sandton, Marlboro, Rhodesfield and the O.R. Tambo International Airport as well as bus routes from Sandton and Rhodesfield stations. When finished in mid-2011, the 80-kilometre regional express train will link the capital Pretoria with national economic hub Johannesburg, running at speeds of up to 160 kilometres (99 miles) an hour and enabling commuters to make the trip in 42 minutes.

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Notes to editors:

Atkins (www.atkinsglobal.com and www.atkinsireland.ie) is one of the world's leading engineering and design consultancies. We have the depth and breadth of technical expertise to respond both to the complex challenges of major infrastructure projects, and the urgent transition to a low-carbon economy. Whether it's the concept for a new skyscraper, the upgrade of a rail network, the modelling of a flood defence system or the improvement of a management process, we plan, design and enable solutions.

Atkins employs more than 150 staff in Ireland with offices in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast.

Atkins in Ireland are leaders in Roads, Engineering, Architecture, Quantity Surveying, Water, Environmental (Landscape, Noise and Ecology) and Transportation Planning with a large no. of private and public sector clients.

Atkins has an exciting and varied range of projects in Ireland including; M50 PPP Upgrade, Limerick Greyhound Stadium, Finglas Garda Station, and Curraheen Wind Farms.

Atkins is the official engineering design services provider for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.