

Moscow's Ring Road Adds Lanes

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The Moscow Ring Road will gain two extra lanes as part of an effort to ease congestion, a city official said Friday.

"The MKAD will be widened on both the city side and the regional side, Marat Khusnullin, deputy mayor for town planning and construction, told reporters Friday.

Parallel roads will be built where widening the MKAD itself is not practical, he added.

The city government is preparing to build some 300 kilometers of extra roads, including the expansion of the MKAD, major access highways and connecting roads between suburbs, Khusnullin said.

He also said the fourth transport ring would be completed in a "truncated" version, RIA-Novosti reported.

Mayor Sergei Sobyenin had earlier frozen work on the projected fourth ring on the grounds that it was unlikely to relieve traffic jams.

Other construction projects targeted at the city's rapidly growing population of automobiles include building 2 million parking spaces over the next five years.

Improving Moscow's overburdened road network was one of the key tasks President Dmitry Medvedev set when he appointed Sobyenin mayor in October.

Khusnullin said the new strategy was to focus on "thousands of local improvements" like small bridges and extra roads, rather than "five or six major infrastructure projects costing 30 billion rubles [about \$1 billion] each."

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