

Roads to Take Precedence Over Homes

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Road-widening and construction of more interchanges will eventually ease congestion on Kaluzhskoye Shosse. **Valery Volkov**

City Hall will give priority to road-building over new home construction in the expanded Moscow, the city's chief construction official said Thursday.

Kaluzhskoye Shosse is to be widened in anticipation of swelling traffic flows between the capital and the expanded Moscow, city construction department chief Andrei Bochkarev said.

"During reconstruction, the highway will be widened to take flows to the new territories," he added.

The project will include construction of a series of interchanges, "including in places where there are no populated areas, to accommodate the future development of the territory," Bochkarev said.

The road-building plan is meant to "create conditions" for the smooth transfer of traffic and

to create jobs rather than spark a construction boom, Bochkarev said.

Mass home building in the area would be “the death of our city,” he said at a news conference.

Nearly 150,000 hectares of Moscow region land was officially transferred to the city on July 1. The government plans to build housing and offices for government departments to ease overcrowding in Moscow proper.

The bulk of the land lies in a fan-shaped area to the southwest of the city between the Kaluzhskoye and Kievskoye highways.

City Hall says it has been flooded with proposals from Russian and foreign city planning experts after it opened a competition to come up with the best plan for developing the new territory.

Reconstruction work on Kashirskoye Shosse in the south of the city, where workers have been installing three large interchanges, an overpass and several tunnels, will be completed by next year, at least three months ahead of schedule.

“According to the plan, we should be done by the middle of 2013, but I think we’ll be on Kashirskoye by the first quarter of next year,” Bochkarev said.

City Hall’s record of finishing road improvements on time is at best mixed, however. Also on Thursday, Deputy Mayor for Transportation Marat Khusnullin said the years-long construction of an intersection and underground parking garage at Belorusskaya, which he said was trying public patience, would be completed only by the end of 2014, Interfax reported.

“As we’re all tired of this building and we don’t want to waste years more on it, we’re replacing the electricity lines at the budget’s expense,” Khusnullin added. “If possible, the investor will fund the construction. If not, then the budget will pay. The money is there for it,” he said.

Workers should finish digging up the roads to lay pipes and cables by the end of the year. Actual construction on the intersection and parking garage will start in 2013.

Earlier this week, Mayor Sergei Sobyenin fired Nikolai Lyamov as deputy mayor responsible for transportation over his failure to make progress in resolving the city’s infamous traffic jams.

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