

# City Has New Plans to Battle Jams

By [Alexander Bratersky](#)

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Bolshaya Nikitskaya Ulitsa is one of the thoroughfares to be restricted. **Igor Tabakov**

The Moscow government will spend an additional 67 billion (\$2.2 billion) in 2013 to ease traffic congestion, city transportation chief Maxim Liksutov said Wednesday.

Unveiling City Hall's plans for the this year, Liksutov said authorities would spend 367 billion rubles for developing new roads, buying new public transportation and building new commuter parking lots in the city.

The allocated budget is an increase from the 300 billion rubles spent last year, Liksutov said, according to a transcript of his speech posted on his official website Wednesday.

"Plans for 2012 were fulfilled, and compared with the situation at the beginning of the year, progress regarding key indicators of effectiveness is visible," Liksutov said.

Liksutov said the city is planning to build 180 more commuter parking lots in 2013, an effort seen as ambitious, since the city created only 11 such lots last year, according to figures

provided by the minister.

Liksutov added that this year the city would also be able to maintain 100 percent control over transportation using the Glonass system, a Russian version of the U.S. Global Positioning System.

Analysts said the city is increasing spending to alleviate traffic problems in advance of municipal elections, scheduled for 2014.

According to a poll conducted in October by state polling agency VTsIOM, Mayor Sergei Sobyenin's approval rating stands at 54 to 60 percent.

But the same poll stated that 65 percent of respondents called traffic the city's most important problem. The margin of error was 3.4 percentage points.

However, one of the city's tactics to ease traffic by setting up paid parking in the city center was met with public resistance.

Hundreds of residents have started a campaign on Facebook to urge the government to reconsider the decision.

Campaigners said the new parking rules make no exemptions for those who park their cars near their residential areas.

Liksutov has also said the city would expand the paid parking initiative, which could ease traffic up to 15 percent in 2013.

Another measure reiterated by Liksutov regarding the introduction of a new ticket system in the metro has also caused public displeasure. The government has stopped selling two-trip tickets, which have been popular with metro commuters.

The government is planning to introduce a new type of ticket valid for 90 minutes that can also be used on other means of transportation but will cost more.

Consumer right advocates said Wednesday that they were planning to appeal the new system in court, saying it violated rights of consumers who do not want to pay for the additional service, Izvestia reported.

Contact the author at [a.bratersky@imedia.ru](mailto:a.bratersky@imedia.ru)

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