

Letter by Pierre Joubert to Minister Gordham 13-12-03

**The IPTS is not an Act of
Parliament**

Statement by Pierre Joubert

www.septua.co.za

Nelson Mandela Bay
(Port Elizabeth)
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Condensed version of report for busy people with short attention spans
and other priorities

You might be one of them, sorry for intruding
your spam filter might even save you from reading this
but please do read it to the end

Please see attached open letter 2013-12-03 to
Minister of Finance, The Hon Mr Pravin Gordham

**There should be no more money spent on the
IPTS**

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**The IPTS is not an Act of
Parliament**

It is merely an item on the wish list

Along with other things like

Housing

Jobs

Education

Health Care

Electricity, Roads and Water

The Bucket System

Etc

But it received high priority and a lot of money has been allocated to it

carelessly, and the system has failed hopelessly

Instead of giving more money Treasury should demand a judicial inquiry into the failure of the system they have so far supported



1. Endless Stalling Mark Wiggett's cartoon of 23 November 2012 had a crack then at one of many "new" target dates for the system to start running. This date also failed and only in March 2013 did busses run for the first time on the Pilot Routes. However, commuters did not use the busses and they ran empty. They ran empty because the pilot routes did not go to residential areas, and therefore served little purpose. For the short distances they did cover, people continued to use taxis. During this time there were stops and starts when no busses ran, and at the time of this writing, the busses are again at a standstill.

2. Taxis paid to keep off the roads. While all promotional material lauding BRTs world wide said that the new busses put no one out of their jobs, it is well known that in NMBM a small number of volunteer taxi owners were actually being paid to take their vehicles off the road. Planners in NMBM never reached an agreement with the remaining taxi owners and are being held to ransom. The said payment system is a bribe for pseudo cooperation.

3. Main objective is to take taxis off the roads. Having to buy their co-operation shows how desperate Planners are and how badly the whole thing was planned. But not only that, due to poor technical layouts, Planners have an even more difficult bill of goods to sell

4. Poor technical layouts of bus lanes While taxis are not cooperating it is not recognized or admitted that the technical layouts of the bus lanes so far built in Govan and Kempston, with RH doors facing center islands, is a poor arrangement for NMBM. The system, copied from Bogota, a very large city in South America is a poor fit for NMBM. See Figs 1, 2 and 5 on illustrations page www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/IPTS_not_act_illustrations.pdf (Note 1). An analysis of cities around the world shows only a few where center unloading is used. Mostly South America, but even there the pattern is mixed. www.septua.co.za/doors.htm (Note 3) Center unloading cannot be extended into the Townships, or into the suburbs. NMBM is too small www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/khulani_rise_and_fall.htm (Note 4) to have dedicated busses that can only run in parts of the City. No-one would dream of putting a BRT down Adderly Street. While busses are not running this shortcoming is being masked. Except that drivers now see more congestion and less road space. However, despite this, Planners are extending the poor arrangement to Standford Rd in a frenzy while Govt is dangling more money in the hope they will see quick results. The IPTS is not an Act of Parliament, only a wish. Planners have to make that wish come true.

5. Standford Road Those aforesaid taxi owners who agreed to receive payments for taking their taxis off the road are from the "Northern Areas" served by Standford Road. This provided a thin thread of justification for Standford Road construction to proceed, an unfortunate event because Planners are blindly extending the non operative and untested concept from Govan Mbeki and Kempston Road (The Khulani Corridor).

6. Khulani Corridor, The, where is it ?? The Khulani Corridor was to be the backbone of the new "world class" transportation system on which the justification for the (first) Billion Rand and subsequent destruction of Govan Mbeki was based and it is now never mentioned and will stay swept under the carpet if some-one doesn't keep reminding

them of their ambitious failed promises. See Pic 9 for extracts from founding documents, NMBM 2006 PTS and DOT 2007 PTAP

7. Eagerness by Government Underlying all this is an eagerness of Government to see the system succeed. Encouraged by local Planners and Politicians, they are pouring in more millions. "Strict Conditions" are attached to the latest impending release of additional funds (see Herald news report 2013-12-08), but this is not enough. There should be no more money given to this failed project, while plans remain all mixed up, while the taxi industry is not 100% in agreement, and while the South American style is still being followed. The IPTS is not an Act of Parliament, only a wish

8. Reckless use of money Large sums of money are irresponsibly being released towards this project and there is no control by Treasury over how the money is being used. NMBM Planners were not ready for R140m in 2012 nor for R350m in 2013. But the money must be spent or given back. Use it or lose it. So uses for the funds are being fabricated, on "quick wins" and on other things with weak justifications to link same to IPTS. This gave rise to the wanton waste of R100m against Lunmen and an open court case, and the disaster of Stanford. There is no report back procedure to see whether the promised results are in fact achieved from the allocation of the money. As happens in the real business world. Then the Municipality calls its departments "business" units

9. Over specification - waste of money Perfectly good and superior road surfaces were destroyed by the IPTS construction, to lay inflexible dividing kerbs for the new **untested** system, when they could have painted the lanes (Pic 4 Seoul). See examples Annex A, B and C. This waste of money is inexcusable and should be probed. No more money should be given to the people who created this waste (Note 2 below)

www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure_Kempston_Rd_South.pdf

www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure_Theale_Street.pdf

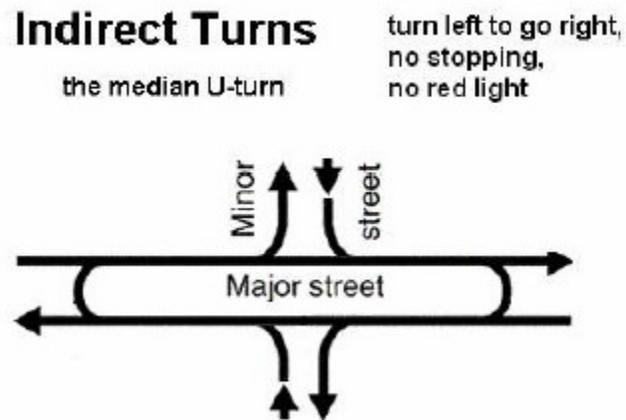
www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure_Fettes_road.pdf

10. Downgrade of NMBM roads is accepted by DOT The policy of DOT is that it is OK to reduce the level of service of existing roads to accommodate the BRTs (1). There-in lies a huge conflict of interest. This needs to be hotly defended by the road user community. One cannot plan to worsen a road network which in the 21st century is a cornerstone of the economy, especially in the face of continued population and economic growth. Because of the large car industry infra-structure Port Elizabeth was often in the past called the Detroit of South Africa. Our existence as a City and employment center depends on the growth of the car industry. Our Road network has to grow with it, not shrink.

11. Axle Load Additional Penalty from Artic Busses The single axle of the trailing carriage of the artic busses, we are told, exerts an extra high load on the road surface which requires extra strength and cost in road surface (1). This is an additional parasitic cost element, needed only for the artic busses which are an over kill and poor fit for NMBM anyway. Rather get rid of the artic busses and develop a streamlined public transport system with smaller more flexible vehicle

(1) Per BRT/IPTS consultant Mr Craig Simmer

12. Sort out existing road networks first Before trying to put in a BRT system, the existing road network should have been upgraded to more free flowing. No use putting in BRTs and then they have to struggle through the same congestion as general traffic, with the same number of red lights. Nothing is gained in the end. Remedies to sort out the existing roads are available, but unknown to local Planners. One example is the Indirect Turn shown below. Others are on the author's website www.septua.co.za. NMBM has a growth crisis, an arterial route crisis, a red light crisis, a right turn crisis and a road reserve crisis, and those should be dealt with before BRTs can serve any real purpose.



13. Get control over Road Reserves ... And NMBM has a property developer crisis, which will not stop until every square inch has had a building put on it for said property developers to benefit from at the expense of free traffic flow. There is no evidence yet that the City sees it this way and we will continue "to build ourselves in". Current road reserves are a thing that belonged to the Planners of 100 years ago and current Planners demonstrate no concern for the fact that road reserves are becoming a scarce commodity and / or that they should take control over it into the future. Instead they are flogging some-one else's unrealistic wish

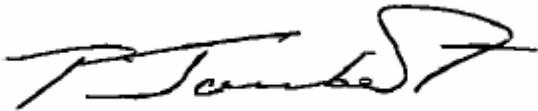
15. Some Urban Renewal in old built up areas of a City is an essential unavoidable element that might have to accompany road upgrades (Pic 6). Other than Njoli Square, no building upgrades were proposed anywhere among the NMBM IPTS plans. Specifically Korsten, (Pic 7) where a modal interchange was proposed, concept plans included preservation of all old buildings and old building lines. According to concept plans bus routes would have inter-wound their way into this crowded area. However this was mission impossible and final plans were never produced. There never was an intention to move a single brick of the old buildings. In Bogota entire areas such as this were flattened to build their modal interchanges, example Portal de Suba (pic 8).

16. Public Participation is Absent There was some (statutory) public participation in 2007 and 2008, mostly one way meetings to tell people what they were going to get, but with some feedback allowed, like at Korsten there were repeat meetings. But Planners were little interested in comments or objections. If anyone asked to see plans ?? Forget it, it was all top secret.

17. Serving Client's Interest at Expense of Wider Society In the SAICE Codes of Conduct there is a clause that says Civil Engineers may not serve the interests of a client or (singular) community at the expense of wider society. In this case the client is Government, and Planners, who are mostly Civil Engineers, are serving the client's interests at the expense of wider society. Wider society includes the entrepreneurs who are expected to create jobs in an efficient environment, existing service providers, ie taxis and conventional busses, and the general road using public. They are therefore in breach of ethical conduct by allowing their client to dictate a lack of concern for these other elements

18. The IPTS is not an Act of Parliament that says it has to be done, by an urgent date, or at all. Govt laid down guidelines, yes, but local application is by local Planners who have to make local decisions re suitability etc, and so far they have failed.

19. Not all Metros went for IPTS Even though they were targeted by DOT for BRTs to be up and running pre 2010 FIFA SWC, the same way NMBM was, only the two real big ones, Cape Town and Jhb, went for systems. All the others refused to be drawn into the tight SWC time frames, and most of these are still on the drawing board. Only NMBM tried and failed, and now they are covering up and refusing to admit it was a mistake. Instead of giving more money Treasury should demand a judicial inquiry into the failure of the system they have so far supported



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It's cheaper to change things on paper than in the hard, said my old boss

Note 1 Illustrations supporting various statements

www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/IPTS_not_act_illustrations.pdf

Note 2 Wasteful Over-specification in Annexes as follows

[www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure Kempston Rd South.pdf](http://www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure_Kempston_Rd_South.pdf)

[www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure Theale Street.pdf](http://www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure_Theale_Street.pdf)

[www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure Fettes road.pdf](http://www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/Wasteful_expenditure_Fettes_road.pdf)

Note 3 Bus door positions around the world

www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/door_positions.htm

Note 4 Hurried planning caused mistakes in technical layouts

www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/hurried_planning.htm

www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/khulani_rise_and_fall.htm

www.septua.co.za/gordham_files/khuthela.htm