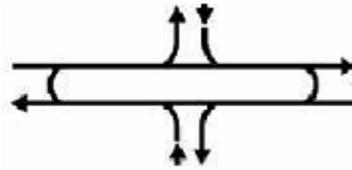


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**Open letter to
The Hon Minister Pravin Minister of
Finance Gordham**

Copies to

Executive Mayor NMBM
Deputy Mayor NMBM
Acting City Manager
Acting Manager IPTS NMBM
Acting Director I&E NMBM
Acting CFO NMBM
Minister of Transport Mr
Ibrahim Seedat DOT Shadow
Minister of Transport
Consulting firms on IPTS projects
Laphum'ilanga Taxi Association CEO
Algoa Bus Company CEO
Business Chamber CEO
NMBM Rate Payer's Association
Editor The Herald, Die Burger, Die Son, The Sun
Selected Councilors known to author
Selected Officials known to the author
Selected interested persons known to the author

See also Statement by Pierre Joubert "IPTS i not an Act of Parliament"

Dear Minister Gordham

Re NMBM Infrastructure Funding - Integrated Public Transport System (IPTS)

**Please stop wasting further money on this
disastrous saga.**

The system is not working and will not work as planned

Close the open excavations, but dont lay any more new concrete until the entire program has been re-evaluated and the negatives debated in public with all stake holders.

No amount of money thrown at this or any project is going to solve the problem of unworkable plans. All spending should be halted and the projects should go back to ground zero for a new start to determine how to deal with the real transportation needs of NMBM

It is ridiculous that our real needs like failing electrical and water infrastructures cannot be accommodated, on the one hand, while money is available from another pocket to pursue an ethereal transportation project which is badly planned and nobody wants.

Please continue to demand that a permanent City Manager, Chief Financial Officer and City Engineer are appointed before further grants are made for this failed system. As it is now, no one is accountable.

See who else in the country can use the 25 busses, because they are not suited to the small size and narrow streets of NMBM. Please proceed with the open Court Cases, reveal the Pikoli Report and open an over-arching judicial enquiry into the entire project and all aspects relative there-to

I say this as a long time follower and commentator on the failed IPTS. I am from the opposite camp whose opinions do not get much attention, because all activity in this is secretive and public participation is not allowed.

All you as Minister know is the rosy picture that has been painted for you by Planners, who have a vested interest in protecting their credibility, and Politicians who do not understand the technicalities, but indirectly benefit from the large flow of capital and their constitutional security.

Among all of them the technical success of the so called world class system is of little consequence, as long as the money flows. Never mind what it buys in the end.

And you have probably been told the failure is all the taxi industry's fault

There are many aspects to this saga and the manner it has been handled, as seen from this side of the table, and this short letter cannot cover it all. However, here are some of the key points.

Fast rewind

In 2007 Planners pandered to the Government's Public Transport objectives with a plan that was "all mixed up", gleefully responding to the opportunity to receive funding for a large project, but evidently not with the overall end result properly thought through

They failed to notice that all other larger metros, except Cape Town and Jhb, were not being drawn into the same tight time frames of the 2010 SWC

They misled the public stating the IPTS (BRT) was a FIFA requirement. Everyone believed the BRTs were essential for NMBM to achieve host city status

They miss-stated the concepts in their justification of the Khulani Corridor, which did not fit the Land Transport Act's visions of a corridor and which was rejected by relevant stake holders

They copied concepts from very large cities where they work, not recognizing it was to be a poor fit for NMBM. You cannot shoehorn intrusive BRTs into NMBM's narrow streets

They vehemently defended their plans and pushed ahead when there were violent and massive protests from all stake holders eg November 2008 taxi strikes and North End Business Community court action.

They allowed the taxis to blackmail them with threats to disrupt SWC matches, which lead to a special MOU and additional intrusive construction in the streets

Said additional intrusive construction was later removed at an additional cost of R30m, without any explanation, apology or admission of guilt.

Lack of taxi cooperation continued and went through various stages that will not be enlarged upon here, except to say, they were never in agreement with the plans

Fast forward

Today, three and a half years after the Soccer World Cup target date, the busses are still not serving the public, even the farcical Pilot Program has stalled for the umpteenth time. Yet construction according to a mixed up plan continues and more money is sought.

A former green lung of business, North End, has seen extensive capital flight, buildings are standing empty and a laissez-faire traffic system is in operation, making a mockery of the wasteful and costly bus lanes that are not serving a purpose

The same people who created the failed system, Officials and Consultants, are still in the driving seat, when in all other domains they would have been replaced by now. Consultants are in control of the Metro's planning. In the absence of a permanent Municipal Manager, Chief Financial Officer and City Engineer, the situation continues out of hand while consultants virtually write their own paychecks.

1000's of taxis, many recapitalized, quite new and in good condition, are standing idle during the day, waiting to take people home from work. Taxis continue to be the preferred means of travel, carrying an estimated 75% of commuters and Alcoa Bus carries a substantial share of the balance. People are happy to use the present system.

The IPTS busses have been available for almost a year, but commuters have not been using them. Every now and then the busses dont run, but no one knows why.

The elementary truths are

No 1, The taxi industry was never in agreement although misleading statements in that regard was made to DOT in 2007 to secure the funding, and in subsequent stepping stages while progressive funding was being justified.

No 2, The busses were incorrectly specified. Low floors are wasteful of floor space. The new long busses carry only 35 seated, with 80 standing, while typical Alcoa busses carry 66 seated and 35 standing

No 3, Center island loading and the modal interchange concept is not suitable for a small metro like NMBM with short distances and narrow streets

No 4, Planners have steadfastly refused to engage with anyone outside their closed circle to consider alternatives for the solution of PE's unique requirements

No 5, DOT has adopted a policy that it is OK to drop a few points in "Level of Service", (www.septua.co.za/level_of_service.htm) as this negative will be offset by the advantages of a BRT. In other words it is OK to make the streets more congested, as long as BRTs are built, because BRTs will take load off the streets to compensate. This policy is highly debatable because, 1. Many will not believe the rationale, 2. There should not be negative planning in anything to do with the future and our economic efficiency, and 3. It makes no allowance for economic and population growth into the future, which will continuously put more demand on transportation systems. In all respects level of service should only be increased, not decreased. We are planning for a long time into the future, and not coming up with a very good plan

Main recommendation

The author is not all negative about this subject. On the contrary he came into this with suggestions to improve traffic flow in congested parts of the city. If that happens everyone benefits.

He has said this before and says it again.

The NMBM should sort out it's congested road network before trying to implement a BRT. Then everyone will benefit There are various remedies for this. Some of these concepts are on a website created by the author www.septua.co.za/suggestions.htm

I trust these points of view will be taken into account in the National Treasury decision re the roll over of IPTS funds for NMBM. Please see supporting links

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

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

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