**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 2078**

**Mr I M Ollis (DA) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

(1) Whether (a) his department, (b) the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) and/or (c) Metrorail had any discussions with the KwaZulu-Natal Member of the Executive Council responsible for transport or the eThekwini Member of the Mayoral Committee for Transport on the possibility of extending the northern rail lines in Durban to the King Shaka International Airport with the intention of running a new train service from King Shaka via Durban North to the downtown areas of the eThekwini Metropolitan City; if not, are any meetings planned in future; if so, (i) on what date did each meeting occur and (ii) which spheres of Government were in attendance;

(2) (a) have any engineering or feasibility studies been completed on the possibility of constructing an extension to the rail service, (b) what is the direct line distance in kilometres and metres between the closest rail line of either Prasa, Metrorail or Transnet to the King Shaka International Airport and (c) what is the average cost per kilometre of constructing new rail lines in the country in terms of the 2018 prices;

(3) does his department, Prasa or Metrorail plan to implement such a rail line in future; if not, why not;if so, what are the relevant details?

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**REPLY :**

1. (a) The Department of Transport has not entered into such discussions ;

(b) PRASA have met with the KwaZulu-Natal Member of the Executive Council responsible for Transport and the Portfolio Committee on Transport Oversight to provide an update on programmes and initiatives at PRASA. One of the areas covered during these meetings was PRASA’s future rail planning, including the conceptual planning study for the Northern Rail Linkages (inclusive of King Shaka International Airport).

1. The dates on which meetings occured were as follows :

KZN MEC for Transport - August 2016

Portfolio Committee – October 2016 and February 2017

(ii) Provincial government

1. (a) A conceptual planning study has been undertaken on potential future rail linkages serving the northern areas, including King Shaka International Airport.

(b) The north coast line, owned by Transnet, is the closest rail line with Tongaat and Nyaninga stations nearest to King Shaka International Airport. In terms of approximate straight line distance between King Shaka International Airport and these stations, the distance is 3km and 5km for Nyaninga and Tongaat stations respectively.

(c) Prices vary in terms of the terrain and engineering solution required. Tunneling and viaduct will be more expensive than at-grade construction. The approximate average cost per kilometre for new line is between R100m – R300m.

1. The conceptual planning study as alluded to above, identified future rail linkages to the northern areas that may be viable in the medium – longer term. It is therefore included as part of PRASA’s longer term rail network expansion plans. Furthermore, the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs has advertised a tender for the appointment of a service provider to determine the optimal public transport solution link for the King Shaka International Airport. The DoT and PRASA will assume a leadership role should rail be found the optimal solution.