

Nelson Mandela Bay Transition Network

Hon J H De Lange
Deputy Minister Justice
Chairman Parliamentary Committee
Climate Change Green Paper
C/O cl

Redhouse 6215
Port Elizabeth
29th June 2011

Dear Mr De Lange,

I refer our submission on the Climate Change Green Paper and our session in Cape Town which I found interesting, useful and encouraging. I reported to our Network the interest in the various submissions and your commitment to ensure the widest possible public input in the formulation of the White Paper.

I mentioned that much of the purpose of both the Green and White papers is to help South Africa meet climate change mitigation standards and your hope that South Africa and others would table strong, meaningful proposals for COP17.

I noted the listing but apparent lack of general understanding of many of the concepts, and the problems of collating different aspirations, factors and opportunities in SA and beyond. Despite arguments on the cause of climate change we cannot deny that it is happening, nor can we deny that we need paradigm shifts in customs, planning and action where climate change, carbon and other resource cost and availability, as well as general pollution are critically escalating problems. Thus the 'new future' must be understood, the wealth of good and quality experience and knowledge captured, linked and used, new ways of living considered and curricula at all institutes restructured to ensure learners, and our country as a whole, are not left behind.

Our Network sees many of the coming problems with great concern but recognizes the immense potential for mitigation and transformation programmes to introduce substantial new living and work opportunities. Thus together with various local groups, including Janet Cherry and others from NMMU, we have articulated a **Low Carbon Vision** that will strengthen our own corner of South Africa (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and its IDZ). We very much hope that this Vision (attached) will be considered and will initiate fruitful discussions locally.

We remain concerned however that there seems no national framework to mesh climate change mitigation proposals, fossil fuel and other resources depletion factors, and pollution problems for meaningful action. Perhaps as suggested this might eventually fall to the National Planning Commission and if they do pick up the challenge we will be ready to provide any input we can.

In the meantime, so that we do not travel a separate path, we wonder if there is any central plan that we might link to in our planning and action, and given your central role in the whole Climate Change Green and White Papers, we wonder if it would be possible to meet with you to discuss your thoughts on a way forward.

We would be grateful for your advice.

Yours truly,

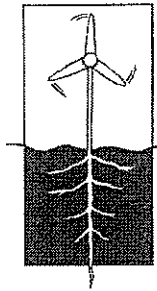
Pierre-Louis Lemerrier

John Carter

Dr Janet Cherry

Dr Hugh Laue

Ryan Allen



Nelson Mandela Bay Transition Network

NEW VISION for Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan (1/08/11)

Overall context and guideline: Development as if people mattered.

We are convinced that it is crucial for the NMBM Vision to be informed by the global challenges related to peak oil, climate change and the limits to growth, as these will dramatically impact on future sustainable living in the metro. The PED Nexus¹ seminars held in 2010 to which NMBTN members made important contributions, and which culminated with the very successful LEAD International Cohort 15², provided critical insights to these challenges and suggestions on the way forward that we trust will be seriously considered in the creation of the vision.

Within this context, we identify a number of key issues that need to be addressed:

a. Poverty reduction

The threat to food security in the metro continues to grow as the input and distribution costs of conventional food production escalate. With unemployment rates as high as they are in the region, a large portion of the population will find it increasingly difficult to feed themselves and their families. This is a struggle that can be avoided in a number of ways which involve localizing the production, distribution, and consumption of food in and around the metro, coupled with a shift toward more ecological methods of production. By bringing food production back into the metro (e.g. community supported and urban agriculture), the doors open for employment opportunities (also empowering the poor at their most needy level) and increased biodiversity, while also ensuring fresh food remains affordable for all its residents.

b. Job Creation

A new and enhanced focus in these areas, while expressing our commitment to actively addressing peak oil, climate change, and building local resilience, could bring more long-term [decent] jobs to the region as well as considerably improving the quality of life for all people living in and around Nelson Mandela Bay. This issue is felt crucial for the metro as its unemployment rate is as high as 35%, and 39% of its formal households are classified as indigent³. As mentioned above, rectifying this would involve extensive reskilling programs that could allow for more local businesses and SMMEs to emerge that provide particularly to local markets.

¹ Population, Environment and Development

² Leadership For Environment And Development

³ Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Integrated Development Plan

The protection by all means of sustainable local production by/for for local population (be food or otherwise) should therefore become a municipality priority and discussed/resolved with all relevant authorities. The recent closure of the Bushy Park Dairy, which is unacceptable, is a case in point. In this case import of powder milk, price fixing and milk monopolies should be urgently discussed. In the meantime, municipality by rules that protect local producers and products could be considered.

c. Housing, spatial development and public transport

Back log of housings, skewed spatial development and related public transport issue, inherited from the apartheid time have already been discussed in length but remains tricky issues to deal with. We agree with the IDP stated objectives “that urban sprawl must be curtailed and optimal use made of existing infrastructure as well as areas in the Metropole be identified in which densification could be permitted”.

In other words, we should end the sub urban phenomenon that appeared when oil was cheap and easily available. Some experiences across the world (f.e in Curitiba in Brazil) have had innovative solutions to resolve this problem. The town re juvenilisation should therefore specially focus on the increase of low cost housing in its centre and be well integrated with the still to be finalized Bus Rapid Transport system and future spatial development.

d. Education

If we are to create a society that is resilient, able to overcome the challenges of fossil fuel depletion and climate change, and sustain itself into the future, then the issue of education is of primary importance and needs to be given utmost priority (with particular focus on human development). With environmental and sustainability issues becoming increasingly demanding, they should provide the framework for the rest of the curriculum. Programs such as WESSA’s EcoSchools and those of Food & Trees For Africa then become of utmost importance, where young minds gain hands-on experience in the subjects of biodiversity conservation, organic food growing, alternative energies and recycling, allowing them to be better equipped to make valuable contributions to their community both during and after their schooling years.

Investing in continuous environmental education programs for the general public are equally as important in order to redress the lack of information and interest on these subjects. This is felt as crucial as adequate education and information will both empower and build the necessary resilience toward effectively adapting to climate change and peak oil. The PED seminars held last year were valuable in that regard but were poorly attended by the general public and key stakeholders due to the lack of advertising for these events.

e. Resource conservation

Because of the scarcity of water in the region, and energy supply being unreliable throughout the nation, any new structures being built must be designed and constructed with these issues in mind. Rain water harvesting, grey water recycling, renewable energy generation etc should become key elements in every design. Existing structures should, as far as possible, be adapted in the same way in order to reduce current strain on our dams and energy grid. For example: roof space of existing structures throughout the metro should be utilized for installation of solar

photovoltaic panels that could then feed back into the grid. The project of FWFTP (Fish Water Flat Treatment Plant) to recycle waste water is a move in the right direction, though in the long-term, the vision should be to relocate the works from the danger of rising sea levels, storm surges and floods that are projected to become more frequent with global warming (such extreme weather events have been witnessed over the last year in Russia and Australia and presently in USA and South America). With water scarcity likely to get worse, the long term vision should consider moving away from high energy, high maintenance water borne sewage treatment systems to low-capital expenditure, low-energy alternatives that are already available.

f. Sustainable development and the satisfaction of basic needs.

Commerce and industry have particularly important roles to play in reducing the negative ecological impact and fossil fuel dependence of our metro. The Coega IDZ has immense potential to assist this transition to a low-carbon economy and society should it begin to target specific industries such as manufacturing in renewable energy generation. Apart from creating a large number of long-term, sustainable jobs, it would set the pace toward a sustainable future. According to a recent study by the IPCC⁴, “Renewable energy could account for almost 80% of the world's energy supply within four decades - but only if governments pursue the policies needed to promote green power”

Currently Coega is attracting dirty, energy-intensive industries (such as an oil refinery) which will completely counteract this vision of a low-carbon metro that is people-centered, and locally resilient. Such environmentally destructive industries do not provide long-term sustainable benefit to the majority of the metro's people, and the negative health impacts are well known (as experienced with refineries around Durban for example).

Greater attention also needs to go into local manufacturing and distribution to local markets. This encourages a much stronger and more resilient local economy than one that is too dependent on foreign markets, the servicing of which will become ever more problematic with rising energy costs due to peak oil. Achieving this growth in the development of local enterprises will require considerable skills training and education that will further empower residents in and around the metro.

g. Waste management

In order to maintain good health of the environment and residents within the metro, the issue of waste must also be addressed. With land fills already under considerable strain, damaging the immediate environment and releasing more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, it is important that steps be taken to drastically reduce the amount of waste the metro produces. Part of this would involve increased focus on recycling and the use of biodegradable packaging instead of plastics. Waste reduction and recycling is the responsibility of not only the residents of the metro, but that of the corporate and industrial sectors as well.

Increased support for creative recycling initiatives at grassroots level (such as Noziqhamo Art & Craft & Recycling in Motherwell) also becomes particularly important as waste materials are used

⁴ Summary for policy makers – April 2011

to create functional as well as decorative items with very little energy inputs. Not only does this reduce strain on land fills, but also provides very creative employment opportunities.

h. Biodiversity Conservation

Nelson Mandela Bay, with five biomes within its boundaries, has the potential to be one of the most ecologically attractive metropolitans in the world. We wish to see the value of such diversity realized with particular effort going in to its rehabilitation and conservation. Extensive planting of indigenous trees and other plant species should therefore be considered in parks and green belt areas in order to rehabilitate and maintain ecosystem services. However, this biodiversity should exist not only in parks and protected areas but be integrated within the urban and suburban landscape. The benefits of these efforts are vast and include long-term employment opportunities in conservation, rehabilitation, education and eco-tourism. We congratulate the Metro for the well researched and carefully put together Bioregional Plan that could be used to help educate the public on both the value of our precious biodiversity and the dangers of its destruction.

i. Dependency and lack of resilience

That 44% of metro's households depend on social grants⁵ is of great concern, especially because this number is increasing every year with no set limit and date line. The vision must therefore include an ongoing commitment to reduce entitlement and dependency by genuine empowerment programmes of the people by the people – facilitated, but not imposed by Government.

j. Coordination and policy alignment

Various departments and organizations are already doing work in these areas, but seem to do so in isolation. In order to resolve the challenges of our time at the necessary pace, these groups need to work together **toward the same vision**, with a full understanding of the cross-cutting nature of these issues. The same applies to various governmental policies and development strategies as all the issues pertaining to sustainability, environment, population and development are interconnected.

A new low carbon development paradigm will affect each and every sector and requires extensive coordination among them. It is therefore felt crucial to identify, at provincial as well as municipal level, a coordinating body (such as a planning commission) that could lead the way to coordinate and create necessary synergies between these different sectors. Energy, housing and transport for example will require continuous and extensive guidelines in order to define low-carbon strategies to supply energy, accommodation as well as transport to the people.

(There were very insightful 30 Year Foresight workshops led by COFISA⁶ in which one of our members participated. The process followed in those workshops could be usefully applied to not only developing a truly inspiring vision for the Metro but also provide useful roadmaps for getting there.)

⁵ NMBM IDP

⁶ The Cooperation Framework on Innovation Systems between Finland and South Africa .

The strategy derived from this revised vision should not be dissociated from a rural development plan that will improve living conditions and increase employment opportunities in the rural areas of the province. The latter should prevent future unsustainable influx to the cities, improve food security and provide employment throughout the Eastern Cape.

Vision

Fully aware of the challenges of peak oil and climate change, we envision our metro as being free of its dependence on fossil fuels in order to power itself, provide for and empower its population in a truly sustainable manner.

Understanding the negative impacts of the present economic system, it is our considered opinion that the above vision will only be possible in a drastically new paradigm that prioritizes human development over capital development.

Nelson Mandela Bay has the potential to become South Africa's first "Transition City" that could serve as a model for other cities around the country and the rest of the world, exploring alternative development policies which promote social and economic justice as well as sustainable local development.

We agree that all the strategic objectives stated in the present IDP⁷ are valid and important.

We also completely agree with the IDP that states "it is vital that all strategic planning processes are aligned and fully integrated, so that development does not take place in an *ad hoc* or fragmented manner. Key to this, is the development of a long-term vision and strategic plan, which will be completed during the 2010/11 financial year. This Strategy will inform future integrated development planning, which will in turn inform the Spatial Development framework of the Municipality".

We believe that this integrated development planning would be more easily achieved in the framework of our suggested vision because the latter emphasizes human development over GDP and capital development. It is important to note that the state of our natural environment (including the finite resources contained therein) determines the socio-economic state of our communities, and either directly or indirectly affects all sectors within our municipality.

Nelson Mandela Bay Transition Network

The Nelson Mandela Bay Transition Network is very keen to be further involved in such crucial articulation of a long term development plan and further relevant educational needs. This would squarely fit with its objectives which are:

1. Awareness-raising about the need to implement low-carbon, resilient paradigms in order reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel dependence.
2. The creation of a platform for networking and development of ideas, solutions and constructive responses.

⁷ Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Integrated Development Plan

3. Lobbying government and various institutions to take a long term view that considers the well-being of future generations.
4. Mobilizing community members towards change in light of the above vision by providing practical opportunities for community involvement.
5. Forming a steering committee responsible for the networking of specialized groups and projects relevant to the different aspects of Transition including food, water, energy, housing, environment, social, industry, waste management, transport etc.