

THE N3 CORRIDOR

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The Corridor Concept

Corridor can be defined as land use systems of increased linear intensity, which help to structure and shape the surrounding environment. They are tools of both spatial structuring and economic growth.

(Source: Development Corridors: Towards Appropriate Planning in KwaZulu Natal, Volume 2: Guidelines Document)

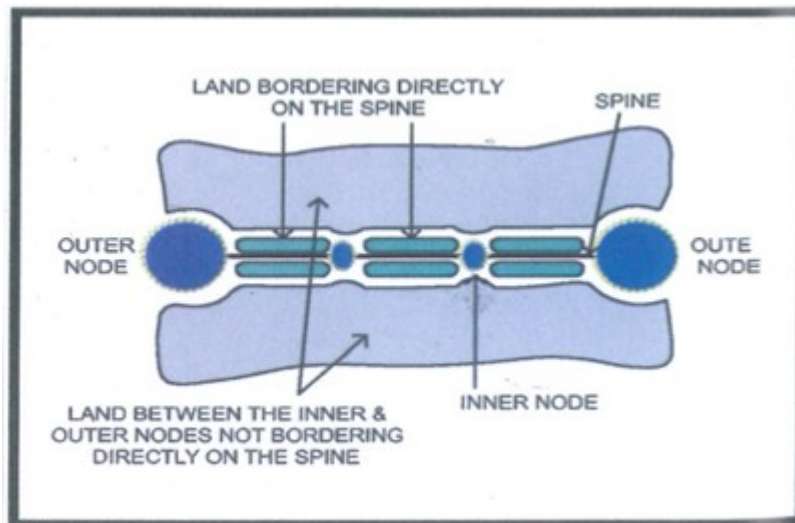


Figure 01: The Generic Components of a Corridor

In rural, provincial and national contexts, corridors can vary in scale. The transport routes maintain the corridors as they carry the flows of people and finance that make the corridor function. The greatest advantage of a corridor is undoubtedly a tool for economic growth because it has the potential to link higher economically productive areas with those on the contrary.

The relationship between the central movement route or spine of a corridor and surrounding land can be complex even though they all comprise of a much wider land use system. The accessibility to any focal point has the ability to attract activities and investment to it and this may not be a single route – there may be clusters of developments that eventually create a hierarchy that produces a more multifaceted pattern of land values to emerge allowing large, small, formal and informal businesses to find a place within the system. Corridors involve the implementation of projects which catalyses and nurtures it to be economically phenomenal. Some of the common projects are housing infill, provision of public facilities, promotion of businesses and investments and land rationalization projects.

Corridors often attract people from kilometers away and are often linked to economic activity in areas further away. This alone indicates the dependency of the corridor on the flow of people and goods. Two of the greatest contributing factors to the success of the corridor are:

- Transportation be it, rail, road or water
- Effective grouping of bulk infrastructure lines and clustering of public facilities

Benefits of a Corridor

- Corridors can effectively initiate decentralization
- Corridors discourage monopolization
- A vertical mix of activities is encouraged
- Corridors effectively breakdown fragmentation and increase integration
- Linear systems allow for residential privacy yet allow for the proximity to catalytic activities

Common Elements of Corridors

- They create a climate of long term spontaneous growth
- Their development is long term
- Attractors form an integral part of the corridor as these are what bring people to the corridor
- Corridors involve a fairly good mix of land use activity
- They can occur alongside or integrated with urban regeneration

The KZN Corridors

The following tables indicate the corridors identified in KwaZulu Natal in the spatial economic development strategy 2007:

Table 5: Priority Nodes according to the KZN Provincial Spatial Economic Development Strategy 2007

No.	Node	Classification	Main Categories of Potential
PN1	eThekwini	Primary Node	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
SN1	Richards Bay	Secondary Node	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
SN2	Msunduzi	Secondary Node	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
SN3	Newcastle	Secondary Node	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
SN4	Port Shepstone	Secondary Node	1, 4, 5, 6

Table 6: Priority Corridors according to the KZN Provincial Spatial Economic Development Strategy 2007

No.	Corridor	Classification	Categories of Potential
PC1	eThekwini - uMhlathuze	Primary Corridor	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
PC2	eThekwini – Msunduzi - uMngeni	Primary Corridor	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PC3	eThekwini – Ugu	Primary Corridor	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
SC1	uMhlathuze – Ulundi - Vryheid	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5, 6
SC2	Kokstad – Umzimkulu – Msunduzi	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5, 6
SC3	Msunduzi – Nkandla - Ulundi	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5, 6
SC4	Ulundi – Nongoma – Pongola	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5, 6
SC5	Lebombo SDI – Maputo	Secondary Corridor	2, 5
SC6	Port Shepstone – St Faiths - Ixopo	Secondary Corridor	2, 5
SC7	Maphumulo – Ndwedwe - Dube	Secondary Corridor	2, 5
SC8	UKhahlamba corridor	Secondary Corridor	5
SC9	Weenen – Nkandla – Eshowe	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5, 6
SC10	Manguzi – Swaziland	Secondary Corridor	2, 5
SC11	Makhathini flats corridor	Secondary Corridor	2
SC12	Greytown – Msinga – Madadeni	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5, 6
SC13	Nkandla – Nqutu – Vryheid	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5
SC14	Mtubathuba – Nongoma	Secondary Corridor	2, 4, 5

KwaZulu-Natal Infrastructure Spending

The KwaZulu-Natal government has increased infrastructure spending by 20 percent over the 2009/10 to 2012/13 medium term expenditure framework (MTEF). Thus R11.093 billion has been set aside for infrastructure development within the various departments for the 2010/11 financial year, which grows to R12.9 billion in 2012/13. *(Speech by KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Finance, Ina Cronjé, during the NBI dialogue with business leaders, King Shaka International and Pietermaritzburg International Airports, Redlands Hotel, Pietermaritzburg, 7 May 2010)*

Regional Economic Integration

One policy for growing the economy is the economic integration of regions or cities, i.e. to create integrated economies. Economic integration refers to the trade and labour unification between different regions by facilitating the movement of goods and services as well as labour between the regions. Broadly speaking, regional integration aims to improve economic outcomes for all participants involved. There is significant evidence and literature that economic integration can be a very successful and powerful policy to grow and expand the member economies. It is very difficult to dispute the merits of regional economic integration.

Goods and services and labour already move between the four major regions in the province. This is evident in the significant concentration of economic activity and output in the four major economic nodes, i.e. Ethekewini, Msunduzi, Hibiscus Coast and Umhlathuze. Therefore there has already been some form of economic integration occurring between the four regional economies and especially between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Observing the vehicle movements at the N3 toll plaza outside Durban confirms the flow of goods and services and labour between Pietermaritzburg and Durban.

There are linkages between the different regions and there must be some benefit to economic integration for it to have occurred. Some of the associated benefits of economic integration include the following:

- Lower prices for distributors and consumers because of the increase in trade
- The balance of money spend from cheaper goods and services can be used to buy more products and services
- Wider selection of goods and services not previously available
- Market expansion, more investment into the region and greater diffusion of technology, creates more employment opportunities for people to move from one region to another to find jobs or to earn higher incomes
- Economies of scale create productivity gains and thus greater national and global competitiveness.

(Speech by KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Finance, Ina Cronjé, during the NBI dialogue with business leaders, King Shaka International and Pietermaritzburg International Airports, Redlands Hotel, Pietermaritzburg, 7 May 2010)

The T-bone

The four economic regions form a T-bone. The T-bone follows the N3 from Pietermaritzburg to Durban and the N2 via the KIA to Richards Bay and the N2 to Port Shepstone.

The basic concept or principle associated with this T-bone is for example:

Live in Pietermaritzburg work in Durban, Shop in Port Shepstone
Live in Richards Bay, do business in Pietermaritzburg shop in Durban

This envisages a situation where:

- there is easy movement of goods and services between the four regions
- there is fast movement of goods and services between the four regions
- there is cost effective movement of goods and services between the four regions
- there is reliable movement of goods and services between the four regions

Transport system

To make this a reality we need a transport system that will create easy, fast, cost effective and reliable movement of goods and services between the four regions. The answer is a rapid rail transit system linking Pietermaritzburg, Durban, Richards Bay and Port Shepstone, forming a T-bone system. The link between Durban and Richards Bay will be via the new King Shaka Airport.

A rapid transit, railway system is an electric passenger railway in an urban area with high capacity and frequency and which is grade separated from other traffic. Rapid transit systems are typically either in underground tunnels or elevated above street level. They are typically integrated with other public transport and often operated by the same public transit authorities.

Rapid transit is significantly faster and has a higher capacity. It is unchallenged in its ability to transport large numbers of people quickly over medium distances with little land use. The environmental benefits are significant to say the least.

The T-bone concept could be the trigger for greater regional economic integration between the four regional economies. This could significantly increase the regional multipliers. The "free" movement of goods and services, and labour would significantly increase the level of economic activity within the integrated economy or T-bone economy.

*(Issued by: Provincial Treasury, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government
7 May 2010)*

N3 Development Corridor

To substantiate the importance of the N3 Corridor, "N3 Corridor Inter-Municipal Forum" has recently been established in order to develop inter-municipal planning relations and to jointly drive and apply the conceptual plan. The forum meets on an ongoing basis. Membership of the forum is comprised of representatives from the environmental, economic, and planning sections from the municipalities affected and as well as from the project funder.

The transport component of the project will involve input and guidance from the KZN Transport together with representation from the various municipalities involved in the project.

The municipalities involved in (and affected by) the corridor project are:

- eThekweni Municipality;
- Mkhambathini Local Municipality
- Msunduzi Local Municipality
- Umngeni Local Municipality
- Umgungundlovu District Municipality

A massive development at Cato Ridge, between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, which is expected to take place within the next decade, is being touted as the "Midrand" of KwaZulu-Natal. The eThekweni Municipality is considering a number of plans from companies and groups for a proposed Midrand-type development, which is expected to generate huge investment in the corridor between the two cities. One plan proposes a housing development on one side of the N3 from Pietermaritzburg to Durban, at Cato Ridge, and an industrial development on the other.

Heavily in favour of the development of the Cato Ridge/Mpumalanga Township area is eThekweni Mayor Obed Mlaba. He said there were plans to connect KZN's two biggest cities by placing a development that would attract investment in the area between them. "Investment into the area of Mpumalanga Township and Cato Ridge should have been natural and we should have had a huge city by now, but this did not happen because of apartheid planning," he said. Mlaba said discussions around the proposed development had begun as early as 1998, when officials had realised the importance of the N3 corridor between the cities, which was carrying traffic from the port. "There is such congestion at the port and the truck stopping points need to be transferred," he said.

Brian Codling, licensee of Fine & Country Pietermaritzburg Midlands estate agency, said he had heard frequently that there was a high demand for land between Hillcrest and Pietermaritzburg. "There are various developments on the go in the area of Ashburton, and it is projected that the corridor between Hillcrest and Pietermaritzburg would become a Midrand equivalent within the next decade," he said. The Chairperson of the Institute of Estate Agents, Arnold Nel, said a massive development which included about 3 000 new houses and game lodges was under way at Ashburton.

Pam Golding estate agent Alida Strassburg said that land in that area would be released and was being rezoned from agricultural to light service industry. "There is going to be massive development in this area, and some land in Camperdown and the Umlaas Road area has already been sold, but the main hub is expected to be at Cato Ridge," said Strassburg.

(Source: Business Report 26 March 2007)

The N3 is a major metropolitan movement route that could be used for the location of mixed-use developments incorporating high intensity agricultural activity, office parks, housing and commercial facilities. Cato Ridge has been earmarked as, the dry port of Durban in attempts to alleviate growing congestion in the city centre, a tourism destination along the old main road and for the development of a new cold storage facility. The N3 has a major tourism potential and its role in the industry. The links to Shongweni, Durban, Hillcrest and Pietermaritzburg is strength for tourism that extends beyond the coastline and city centre. The railway line is a medium that is underutilised but is a mode of transport that is considered to relieve the pressures on road and aqua logistics. Due

to the topography of some of the areas along the corridor, this would take the form of a number of key nodes along the route.

The Giba Business Estate Development and the N3 Corridor

Evidently, the N3 corridor is a phenomenon that cannot flourish on its own and essentially needs infrastructural developments to exponent its growth and success. The developments and economic activities in the areas along the N3 are the most important features of creating links to rural and urban locations. Especially significant to the Corridor between Msunduzi and Ethekewini are the Marianhill and Cato Ridge areas. Both areas have been earmarked for a variety of developments and are supported at some of the foremost levels of governance. Although some of the plans for the Cato Ridge area are somewhat on a longer term, Marianhill has endeavored to establish itself within the identified corridor in a much shorter space of time.

The Giba Business Estate is the first business park development to unlock the potential of the N3 Corridor between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Ideally located along the corridor and integrating with its tourism and economic potential, Giba Business Estate will propel the N3 Corridor strategy. Aligning to the aims of the municipality to maintain an open space corridor along the N3, more inland, Giba Business Estate has conserved and will rehabilitate a generous amount of green areas within its development.

Another contribution of the Giba Business Estate to the N3 corridor is the provision of upgraded bulk infrastructure such as a reservoir, upgraded trunk sewer and electrical supply. This is an important factor in ensuring the success of the corridor and Giba Business Estate has taken that one step ahead of the rest. Concerns about the traffic impact on the N3 and other roads to the development are considered and the widening and upgrades of the roads within the development will see to it that there is no adverse impact on traffic that creates added pressure along the corridor.

In keeping with the socio economic uplifting and linkage between higher and lower thresholds that a corridor strategizes to achieve, the townships in the Marianhill area will also benefit from Giba Business Estate. Creating employment and the need for improved public transport systems, Giba Business Estate further adds value to the momentum of the N3 corridor development.

Giba Business Estate already has visibility and indirect access off the N3 but does have the potential to enjoy direct access of the national route with the introduction of an interchange in the future. The national route is a preferred route and links to other national routes, leading to Richards Bay, Port Shepstone and Johannesburg.

The realizable revival of rail as a preferred mode of transport, routed alongside the N3 Corridor can also be seen as a major bonus to Giba Business Estate investors. The inclusion of rail transport will definitely be an impetus for investment along the corridor.