

IMPROVING TRANSPORT SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY BY STRENGTHENING ITS TRANSPORT FUNCTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study to investigate the advisability and feasibility of establishing a transport authority (TA) in the Capricorn District Municipality (CDM) with a view to strengthening transport service delivery in the district. Given the triple role played by transport in the economy – as a direct provider of services, as a generator of employment and as a catalyst for economic integration, redistribution and development, the provision, operation and maintenance of transport infrastructure and services are thus key factors in developmental local government. The need to ensure that CDM's transportation system is functioning at optimal levels is therefore clear.

The study employed a mixed method approach using a variety of research instruments to undertake a thorough audit and review of CDM's transport function in relation to its stated desire to markedly improve transport service delivery going into the future. Extensive literature reviews were complemented by workshops, discussions as well as interviews with government officials, the transport industry, the private sector, organized business and politicians to produce a rich tapestry of facts, views, opinions and needs that were used to draw scenarios and generate recommendations. In addition, a study visit to the eThekweni Transport Authority – the only such institution operating in South Africa was undertaken to test some of the emerging issues and concepts against the experiences of a functioning transport authority.

CDM's transport function is currently ineffective primarily because it is not only underfunded, but also that the existing staff is thinly spread across its fragmented and scattered functions and activities. Various scenarios and options were generated and interrogated further with a view to seeking to focus on a preferred option, which was then further unpacked to ensure its robustness. The institutional strengthening option, which provides for reconfiguring, capacitating and upgrading the existing CDM transport function, emerged as the most feasible option. It is, at its core, essentially a gradualist approach that could witness overtime the weaning off of this proposed municipal transport unit into a self-sustaining service utility. However, central to strengthening the transport function is the need to put in place an inclusive robust governance structure underpinned by clear role definition and responsibility allocation, adequate funding as well as undivided and indivisible commitment.

Key words

Capricorn District Municipality, transport authority, functions, capacity building, funding, institutional strengthening, legislative mandates, South Africa

1 INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of the democratic political dispensation in South Africa in 1994, the nature and functions of municipalities have significantly metamorphosed, with more emphasis being placed on the developmental role of local government. Developmental local government implies a commitment to working with a broad spectrum of society to find sustainable ways to meet society's socio-economic needs with a view to permanently transforming the quality of life of all citizens (Cameron, 2005). Transportation is one such critical socio-economic need – crucial because it is integral to society's functioning in that it influences the quality and style of life, the range and location of productive and leisure activities, and the goods and services which will be available for consumption (Morlok, 1978; Fuller, 2004). Given that transport plays this important triple role in the political economy – as a direct provider of services, as a generator of employment and as a catalyst for socio-economic integration, redistribution and development, the provision, operation and maintenance of transport infrastructure and services are thus key factors in entrenching “*developmental local government*” (Capricorn District Municipality, 2009; Mashiri et al, 2009). The need to ensure that Capricorn District Municipality's (CDM) transportation system is functioning at optimal levels is therefore clear.

However, currently CDM's transport service delivery is largely ineffective mostly because the transport function is not only underfunded, but also that the existing staff is thinly spread across its fragmented and scattered functions and activities – a microcosm of what the White Paper on National Transport Policy (1996) development process had unravelled and targeted as needing change. While transport provision in South Africa was characterised by fragmented institutional and management structures, wasteful subsidized competition, difficulty of coordination and lack of integration of service between modes, lack of adequate control and enforcement, transport functions and responsibilities were largely fragmented between and within the various spheres of government. Inevitably, this led to inadequate transport service delivery. Predictably, the White Paper (1996) strongly recommended the devolution of transport functions to the lowest competent level under the aegis of an extra-governmental institution termed the transport authority. Two pieces of national and provincial legislation breathed life into and gave effect to the recommendation, namely, the National Land Transport Transition Act (NLTTA) (2000) and the Limpopo Provincial Land Transport Framework (PLTF) (2007).

PLTF (2007) identified CDM as perhaps the only candidate in Limpopo province for the possible implementation of the transport authority concept. This is particularly so given that CDM hosts the capital of Limpopo Province, Polokwane, a city that has strong aspirations to be designated a metropolitan city. This view was supported strongly by CDM's own transport policy (Mashiri et al, 2009). It is against this backdrop that CDM appointed service providers to conduct a study to investigate the advisability and feasibility of establishing a transport authority in its jurisdiction with a view to strengthening transport service delivery in the district.

The paper introduces the subject matter with a specific slant towards the notion of developmental local government, and by extension, the promise of improved service delivery, underpinned by a devolved system of governance characterised by untrammelled decision-making at the local level. It then unpacks the approach taken to gather the relevant data with which to generate scenarios and options employed to assess the advisability of establishing a TA. The genesis of the concept of a TA is then interrogated and its legal and policy basis unravelled with a view to understanding as to whether it indeed supports the establishment of a TA. The limitations of a TA as contemplated in the NLTTA (2000) are then enumerated as a first but decisive step towards the development

of a model for effectively planning and administering transport that enables the sector to fulfil its mandate in CDM. The preferred model is then elaborated complete with key success factors.

2 STUDY APPROACH

The study employed a mixed method approach using a variety of research instruments to undertake a thorough audit and review of CDM's transport function in relation to its stated desire to markedly improve transport service delivery in its jurisdiction. Literature reviews were complemented by workshops, face-to-face meetings as well as interviews with government officials, the transport industry, the private sector, organized business, organised labour and politicians to produce a rich tapestry of facts, views, opinions and needs that were used to draw and evaluate scenarios and generate recommendations. In addition, a study visit to the eThekweni Transport Authority – the only such institution operating in South Africa was undertaken to discuss and test some of the emerging issues and concepts emanating from the literature review and initial stakeholder engagements against the experiences of a functioning transport authority. The visit elicited comments and extensive discussion that enriched the investigation particularly with regard to generating relevant and appropriate study instruments.

3 STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 Study Area

CDM is one of five districts making up Limpopo Province. It has five constituent local authorities one of which is an aspiring metro – Polokwane. A few pointers that illustrate CDM's circumstances in respect of transport are enumerated below:

- CDM exhibits an unmistakable growth in the demand for transport service delivery. Most personal trips during the morning peak start and end within CDM which is an indication of it being a transport area (particularly given the dominance of Polokwane). However, while CDM's road network is a major asset that gives the district some relative comparative advantage, its condition is deteriorating rapidly due to a protracted period of under-funding and relative neglect that exacerbated backlogs and capacity gaps (Capricorn District Municipality, 2009; Mashiri et al, 2009). In this regard, the four main transport corridors are under severe stress and strain owing to the increasing, perhaps unforeseen and certainly, unplanned for traffic. The public passenger transport system is under-performing in relation to its local and national obligations to facilitate access to socio-economic opportunities. Thus, key development goals are not being met, including basic mobility, access, and social integration. Workforce mobility is restricted, thereby stunting national and provincial efforts to create employment opportunities. Current spatial population distribution leaves commuters and other residents distant from essential services describing an inefficient system creating insatiable demands for subsidies which the province and its constituent municipalities can ill-afford.
- CDM has a low private car ownership per household which suggests that most people are captive public transport users while others perhaps do not even travel (except for short trips to procure their daily necessities) (Capricorn District Municipality, 2007a). This suggests that public transport could indeed play a significant if not decisive developmental role in the district's socio-economic trajectory. It provides a *raison d'être* for deliberately focusing on and investing in public transport as well as a platform on which transit-oriented development can thrive. In addition, experience worldwide suggests that bus subsidies are

uneconomic, unprofitable and unsustainable in the long-run. The proposed structure could play a leading role in exploring and developing alternative and perhaps more efficient subsidy models such as bus route franchising models.

- It is of interest to note that CDM has a preponderance of youths in its demographic profile (Capricorn District Municipality, 2008). This has implications in terms of not only providing efficient learner transport, but also suggests high dependency ratios which, in turn, influence service affordability levels. The need to review the existing subsidy policies cannot be over-emphasized. The district exhibits a severe skewed distribution of resources especially given that forty-four percent of its population resides in one urban centre – Polokwane (Capricorn District Municipality, 2007a). As articulated in the preamble, efficient transportation in the district could assist in narrowing this gap by increasing access to socio-economic opportunities.
- CDM's transport function is both under-funded and institutionally weak to respond effectively to its constitutional mandate, thereby hampering integrated delivery and management of transport infrastructure and services, which is cardinal, for example, in oiling other sectors of the local economy (Mashiri et al, 2009).
- The existing supply of transport infrastructure and services for the movement of people and their goods is heavily influenced not by the dictates of strategically planned land-use and space activity organisation, arrangements and distribution, but by a planning approach that can only be described as '*disjointed incrementalism*' (Capricorn District Municipality, 2009). For example, although CDM's resource sector has declined sharply since the global financial crisis, the sector had witnessed rapid growth in recent years influencing the locus of transport infrastructure investment. To meet this demand, the provision of transport infrastructure and services by CDM has had to respond rapidly, albeit retrospectively, but certainly not proactively.

A strand of thought that filters through the foregoing discussion is the unequivocal need to transform the sector with a view to fulfilling the municipality's development mandate. The question though is what model should this transformation take?

3.2 Concept of a Transport Authority

As indicated elsewhere, the notion of TAs stemmed from the White Paper on National Transport Policy (1996), which had identified fragmentation of functions and responsibilities between different spheres of government as bedevilling transport service delivery. This was given effect in legislation through the NLTTA (2000) which provided for the establishment of TAs at the municipal sphere of government as the appropriate institutional architecture for socially sustainable transport. The NLTTA (2000) provided for, among others:

- A single municipality or several municipalities to enter into an agreement with the MEC to establish a TA.
- A founding agreement governing the structure and modus operandi of the TA.
- The transport area of the TA.
- The functions to be performed comprising of mandatory and optional functions.
- A governing body which must consist only of councillors of the participating municipalities and which acts on behalf of the TA.
- Options for the performance of the technical and administrative functions of the TA, and
- Financial arrangements.

For Cameron (2005), it also meant that transport decision-making and administration would need to be based on broad functional transport regions, to ensure holistic planning with a minimum of cross-border movement. Fuller (2004) argues that the aim was to define a transport functional area which embraced the major share of existing and near-term potential transport movements. This would facilitate planning and coordination of an integrated transport system, avoid fragmentation of responsibility for transport services which traverse municipal boundaries, and bring about better coordination between land use and transport (ibid). In terms of the NLTTA (2000), a TA may be a single municipality or municipalities whose areas of jurisdiction fall only or partially within the transport area. In Limpopo, an assessment undertaken through the Provincial Land Transport Framework (PLTF) (2007) concluded that CDM was the only district municipality in the province where a realistic assessment could be made in terms of establishing a TA. This was strongly supported by CDM policy.

The concept behind TAs was deceptively easy – it revolved around the improvement of transport service delivery at the local sphere of government by consolidating transport functions into a single well-managed institutional structure divorced from other municipal functions. This would allow it to focus on its core mandate thereby improving its service delivery record. Deceptive, because since the promulgation of the NLTTA in 2000, and its subsequent mutation into the National Land Transport Act (NLTA) in 2009, there has been no discernible proliferation of TAs. In fact, it would appear that most variants are struggling to make visible and meaningful contributions to transport governance and service delivery – while yet others may be sitting perilously close to the proverbial “throwing-in the towel” to allow them to revert to being regular municipal departments largely because of inevitable funding woes. A few pointers from the vaunted demonstration project in eThekweni provides a few enduring lessons.

3.3 Lessons from eThekweni Transport Authority

As part of the methodology, a visit to eThekweni Transport Authority (ETA) was undertaken from which some useful lessons particularly around funding, governance and scope, which informed the development of study instruments and eventually intervention options, were drawn. For example, from observations the ETA resembled a public transport authority rather than a TA as contemplated in the NLTTA (2000), as it did not have control over, for example, the roads budget. It was interesting to also observe that the ETA appeared to function more or less like a regular department of eThekweni municipality – beholden to the Municipal Manager in terms of executive authority as their positions appear not to have been fully removed from the municipality organogram from which they came.

The integration ticket which provides the *raison d'être* for the adoption of the TA idea was clearly compromised by the co-existence of two structures, namely, the Council Portfolio Committee for the roads function and a separate (political) governing body for the ETA. In the same breadth, while the ETA is perceived as an independent institution which has consolidated transport activities in the municipality, it has not necessarily aided coordination with other functional areas in the metro such as land use.

It was also observed that the ETA holds the short end of the stick with regard to medium-to-long-term financial support from eThekweni Metro, the provincial government and national Department of Transport, which is not only frustrating (as it mocks any serious attempts at forward planning) but also decidedly debilitating as sustainability of the ETA itself is far from guaranteed. This appears to stem from the realisation that the founding agreement contains no specific powers, nor guarantees with regard to funding. Thus, one

of the enduring lessons and a nexus for consensus emanating from the robust discussions was that prospective TA candidates needed to stay clear of unfunded mandates and that the founding agreements needed to be explicit about funding and continued support. Overseas examples of successful TAs all have dedicated and sustainable funding streams to rely on (Krynauw & Van Den Berg, 2005). The importance of crafting a robust founding agreement that guarantees sustainability cannot be over-emphasized. This not only inhibits forward planning and stunts development projects but also erodes trust in the institution by its constituencies.

3.4 Policy and Legislative Context

The establishment of TAs also needs to take into account the provisions of other pieces of legislation which influence service delivery at a local level, the most important of which are summarised hereunder.

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996): Section 83 of the Municipal Structures Act reproduces municipalities' constitutional mandate in terms of functions assigned deriving from Section 156 and 229 of the Constitution – which is in keeping with delegating (abrogating) functions to the lowest competent level. While most of these fall under the non-compulsory category, there is an integrative tenet represented by the municipal planning function.

Local government legislation: The Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (Act No. 32 of 2000) (as amended in 2002) especially the constitutional provisions referred to in Section 83 and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) (Act No. 56 of 2003) have a bearing on the architecture of a TA including its governance structure by way of empowering municipalities to establish specialised entities to perform any function including transport.

National Land Transport Bill (2008) (which is now an Act since 2009): The Bill and the subsequent Act reinforce the original mandate of the South African Constitution, that is, meaningful decentralisation that enables the strengthening of local level service delivery. The NLTA (2009) is not as forthright about the establishment of TAs as the NLTTA (2000), ostensibly because most transport authority powers and functions are in effect given to municipalities as planning authorities in their own right. Another consideration is that a TA must be a municipal entity under the MSA (2000) subject to the MFMA (2003). The implication is that the governing body could be constituted by professionals and politicians alike rather than just councillors as envisaged in the NLTTA (2000) – an idea followed through in the recommended model. Two clear messages stemming from the analysis are evident – CDM is defined as a functional planning authority (defined as any entity which, in terms of Section 20, has to prepare transport plans for its jurisdiction), empowered by the Act to discharge all municipal functions including transport. Secondly, all municipalities such as CDM are expected to rationalize their administrations so that transport and land use functions are integrated – an activity that is necessarily better organised where there is a planning authority rather a TA (which tends to be an outsider, even aloof – the transport sector is replete with similar examples where extracting relevant information for forward planning purposes by government officials becomes a major challenge). So, clearly, for all intent and purposes, the policy and legislative frameworks in place strongly support the establishment and strengthening of CDM's transport unit/function.

3.5 Towards a Model for Strengthening the Transport Function

Save for a few cases (notably in Canada and Dubai), a rapid literature scan revealed that many so called TAs focus only on public transport, for example, in the UK, authorities function primarily to plan, coordinate and manage public transport systems (Krynauw & Van Den Berg, 2005). In South Africa they are conceptualised in broader terms to cover public and private transport, service and infrastructure (ibid). For Cameron (2005), an authority should have autonomous powers and be capable of making independent decisions, pursuant to the carrying out of its duties, subject to its mandate and performance contract with the Minister and/or the provincial MEC.

When the establishment of TAs was in vogue, Cameron (2005) rightly questioned the need for TAs in areas where there was already a metropolitan authority, covering broad functional transport areas. Where transport challenges were minimal, he found it unnecessary to go to the lengths envisaged in the Act (NLTTA, 2000) to produce transport plans. He correctly argued that South Africa does not have the human resources to devote to such costly and perhaps unnecessary activities.

Cameron (2005) further argues relatively persuasively about the need begin to reconsider the advisability of the establishment of TAs, employing five parameters:

- *Capacity challenges*: it would appear foolhardy to burden municipalities with additional statutory planning tasks when they are struggling to accomplish existing activities largely because of lack of capacity and commitment. The requirements for a TA are so onerous that only the biggest metros would have the wherewithal to make them work.
- *Costs of establishing a TA and an absence of funding mechanisms*: Aside of personnel costs, the production and revision of the five plans as per minimum requirements are costly (Current Public Transport Record, Integrated Transport Plan, Operating License Strategy, Rationalisation Plan and Public Transport Plan).
- *Lack of clarity about transport powers at municipal level of government and reluctance to devolve powers and assign functions to municipalities*: While the NLTTA (2000) was fairly emphatic about the devolution of transport functions, it was not explicit about the devolution of powers to authorities, including the powers of taxation and user-charging. In addition, national and provincial departments of transport appear reluctant to fully devolve actual budgets or funding instruments to municipalities.
- *Lack of coordination and marketing*: Generally, public transport services are operated as discreet modal entities (Cameron, 2005) lacking overall coordination and service integration across jurisdictions describing a situation of low levels of service. The need for authorities to manage coordination, marketing, timetables, monitoring and supervision functions of public transport services, cannot be over-emphasized. Interestingly, this remains one of the most compelling reasons to establish a TA with powers of implementation and funds to achieve the necessary improvements.
- *By-laws*: Because a TA is an authority and not a municipal entity, it cannot make by-laws which are essential in widening its revenue dragnet.

Whatever the model, there needs to be close working partnership with all spheres of government and consistent consultation across relevant departments, communities

(including ward committees) and stakeholders affected by its activities. It must respond to and monitor public enquiries. Consultation is thus the watchword.

What is evident from this discussion is that establishing a TA is indeed a negotiated process given that there no off-the-shelf technical model that could easily be replicated elsewhere, but perhaps an array of options which would need to be painstakingly tailored to suit the specific local circumstances. Designing the institutional architecture and making it work is as much a political process as it is a technical exercise given that it deals with jurisdictions, institutional reconfigurations, reorienting functional mandates and exercising significant power and influence over the socio-economic trajectory of a local authority. The proposed entity would thus have to borrow from, adapt and incorporate experiences from a broad variety of local and international institutions.

3.6 Proposed Transformation Model

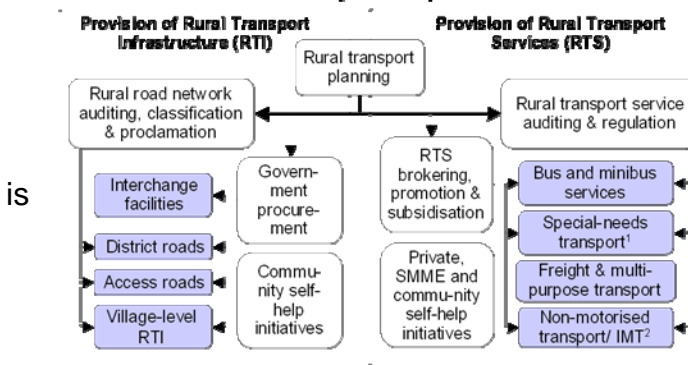
3.6.1 Rationale for choice

The rationale for establishing a Transport Authority was to improve transport service delivery in the municipal sphere of government by grouping transport functions into a single, well managed and focused institutional structure. The same rationale still holds water in the choice of an organisational option best suited for CDM.

With the foregoing analysis as a backdrop, alternative options and scenarios were generated and interrogated further with a view to seeking to focus on a preferred option, which would then be unpacked to ensure its robustness vis-a-vis the development and management of socially sustainable transport (incorporating all elements as indicated in the Figure 1). The following guiding principles were followed in the choice of an organisational model for CDM:

- The model should address fragmentation of the transport functions
- The model must be supported by current land transport legislations
- It must be cost-effective
- It must recognise the role of the three tiers of government, and
- It must also recognise the role of the society/public.

Figure 1: Proposed Scope & Coverage of a Rural Transport and Service Delivery Unit: Capricorn District

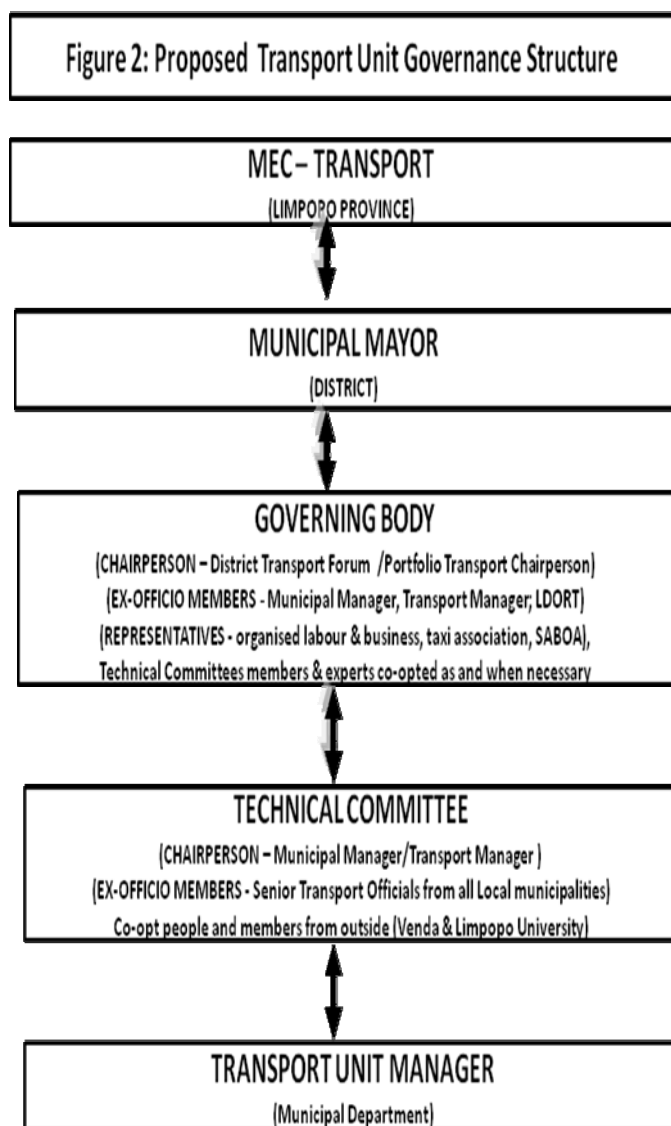


Source: Department of Transport, 2007

Prior to interrogating the suggested options, a list of functions that a transport unit should perform was drawn with inputs from CDM and stakeholders. Figure 1 summarises the mandate and key competencies, that a robust TA in CDM expected to fulfil. Out of the guiding principles, the environmental analysis report, the best practice benchmarking models, and the legislative dictates, the following options were considered:

- A transport authority as contemplated in the NLTTA (2000)
- Two separate authorities to account for the dominance of Polokwane
- Institutional strengthening employing the existing organogram, and
- Institutional strengthening by reconfiguring and upgrading the transport function within the ambit of a transport planning authority as contemplated in the NLTA (2009).

Figure 2 presents the proposed transport unit governance structure for CDM (in the sections that follow, the process of arriving at this structure is elaborated). For reasons already elaborated elsewhere, chief of which was its unsustainable funding model, which not only inhibits forward planning and stunts development projects but also erodes trust in the institution by its constituencies, the TA option was dropped. The concept of an independent entity outside the municipal structure was also debunked as a viable option largely because once a separate or parallel structure is created, the very same problem of integration that constitutes the rationale for its existence, is inadvertently amplified.



Source: Capricorn District Municipality, 2009

the weaker authority.

With regard to the second scenario pitting Polokwane (which has to deal with relatively complex transport systems, multi-modal transport, major development and demographic changes, urban growth management pressures [migration to urban areas], the need for integration, etc.) against CDM, political and practical considerations militated against this option involving joint transport authorities across municipal jurisdictions largely because of the following difficulties:

- Governance, accountability and representation by the various authorities on the governing body
- Possible divergence of political objectives between the two municipalities
- Placing of technical responsibilities where this body is internal to the municipality
- Contribution of funding for the TA by the two municipalities
- Different budgeting processes and funding mechanisms, and
- Possible different scales of transport issues between vastly different municipalities leading to possible marginalization of

It is important to observe that Polokwane represents a polycentric urban region presenting unique opportunities and challenges. Sticky issues of planning integration between the municipality and the district – can be circumvented by establishing a joint planning structure for the district. Another way would be to consider the merits of the city region concept, which notion would potentially sit very comfortably with the current situation in the district where Polokwane is a dominant local authority.

In terms of the third option, tinkering with existing organogram was deemed unviable given the enormity of the challenges and unsuccessful attempts at seeking solutions to those problems through the existing structure.

The institutional strengthening option providing for reconfiguring, capacitating and upgrading the existing CDM transport function within the ambit of the notion of planning authority as contemplated in the NLTA (2009) emerged as the most feasible one. It is, at its core, essentially a gradualist approach that could witness overtime the weaning off of this proposed municipal transport unit into a self-sustaining service utility.

Central to strengthening the transport function is the need to put in place robust governance structures underpinned by clear role definition and responsibility allocation by all stakeholders (as illustrated in Figure 3). The key strategic positions that have to be filled to service the mandatory and optional transportation functions with a view to ensuring that the ‘new transport unit’ negotiates the transition period successfully are presented in the diagram below. The executing arm of the unit would essentially have three branches:

- Empowerment and Institutional Management
- Transport Operations / Services
- Transport Infrastructure (roads, stormwater, traffic management and safety)

The governance structure embodies its consultative, consensus-seeking nature that will assist the unit in navigating potentially many challenges the unit is bound to face. Table 1 summarises the envisaged cooperative governance model.

Table 1: Envisaged Transport Unit Cooperative Governance Model for CDM

Institution/player	Role in the proposed model
MEC, Mayor, HOD & Municipal Manager	Strategic decision-making stratum of the model with emphasis on the provision of leadership and commitment
Limpopo Department of Roads & Transport	Strategic coordination and support
District Transport Forum	Discussion and dissemination forum, sounding board for ideas and ultimately legitimacy
Polokwane Local Municipality	Partnership in capacitating other local municipalities and providing a demonstration effect through their relatively well-funded projects
Other constituent municipalities	Support the transport unit by providing inputs to & participating in all forums related to transport in a partnership arrangement
Stakeholders	Provide critical support and ultimately legitimacy.

Source: Capricorn District Municipality (2009); Mashiri et al (2009)

3.7 Proposed CDM Transport Unit Functions

3.7.1 Ensuring effective and efficient transport delivery

The need to ensure effective and efficient transport delivery in the district through the auspices of the proposed transport unit in terms of generating relevant transport policies, strategies and integration of all transport modes within the district, cannot be over-emphasized. In turn, this would influence constituent local municipalities to creatively perform their transport function within the ambit of and guided by the district policies and strategies. Allocating integrative functions to the proposed transport unit and the delivery of an integrated public transport system struck a chord with many of the interviewees. In this regard, the consensus among respondents was that the transport unit needs to be

empowered such that it has the administrative and regulatory wherewithal to timely and successfully implement transportation projects.

While there was concern on duplication of functions, lack of proper enforcement as well as lack of integration of modes, suggestions were made that co-governance eliminates duplication of functions, particularly where there is clarity with regard to, for example, fare structures including concessionary fares for certain passengers such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, learners, etc. One respondent in the transport business sector argued passionately about the lack of and therefore need for an NMT and special needs section of the proposed transport unit as hereunder elaborated:

“...This whole exercise should take cognizance of the fact that CDM is particularly predominantly rural in nature and character. The thinking which relegated and under-provided for NMT should certainly be a relic of the past. It is also important to remember that the bulk of people use public transport maybe approximately 95% for inter-district and long trips. However shorter intra-district and village movements are serviced by NMT...In the same vein, rural freight transport issues and challenges should not be considered an extension of urban freight and logistics management activities. This unit should thus undertake the task of streamlining and embedding the NMT and special needs transport within the context of the overall CDM transportation system...” (Extract of an interview with a business person in the transport sector in CDM – 10 December 2008).

3.7.2 Devolution of powers and strengthening decentralized decision-making

It was considered that some functions currently performed by the province would best be devolved to the district. They include the regulatory, operating licenses, subsidies, monitoring and law enforcement (Capricorn District Municipality, 2009; Mashiri et al, 2009). Complementing this, the suggestion was made that the LDORT’s district office be merged with the proposed transport unit within the district. Existing scarce skills in the province would thus be optimally used.

Most respondents felt that the strengthened transport unit should have, among its responsibilities, the following – planning, overseeing the provision of transport infrastructure and other facilities, managing transport contracts, and assisting local municipalities to undertake the same activities. Strengthening CDM’s transport unit was viewed by most respondents not only as the most feasible, but also as the most palatable option for prospective funders as it does not impose at the outset, an establishment and operational budget which would be difficult to defend.

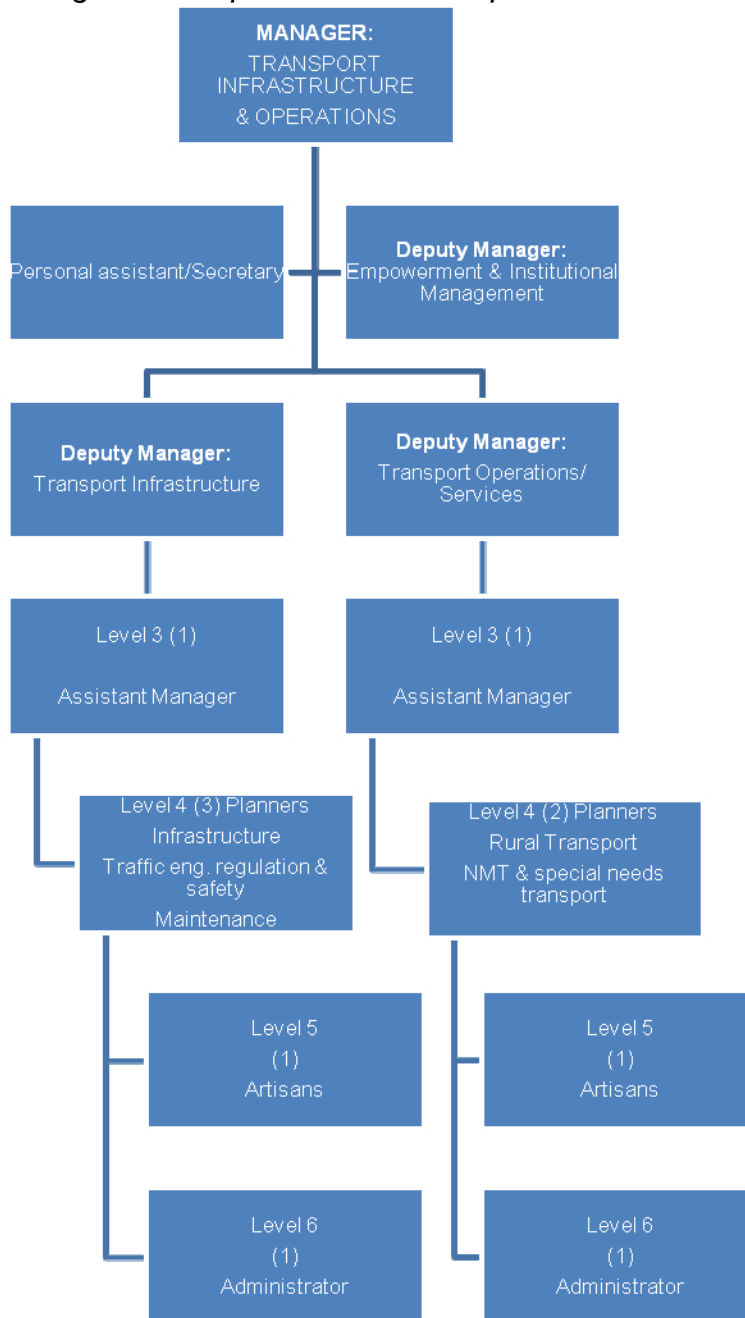
It is evident that this full range of functions would present a major challenge to the proposed transport unit with far reaching implications in terms of capacity, resources, organizational adjustments and funding requirements. In considering the appropriate functions, a few intertwining pointers were recognized:

The point that needs to be made here is that for the ‘new transport unit’ to take on compulsory functions and leave out the closely related optional functions serves to perpetuate the fragmentation of responsibility – a shortcoming that sparked the debate which eventually culminated in development of the concept of the TA.

3.7.3 Proposed CDM Transport Unit Organogram

A case can be made for a phased uptake of transport functions by a TA starting with compulsory functions and on-ramping some optional functions overtime. This will provide room to manoeuvre in a transitional period while building capacity across the board. Figure 3 presents the recommended CDM transport unit function. This organogram was an outcome of intensive and extensive discussions and consultations with CDM Council and stakeholders. In crystallising this structure, issues of practicality, funding and budgetary requirements, transitional considerations, political support, focus and scope of the transport unit were discussed, analysed and fed into the construction of the institutional structure.

Figure 3: Proposed CDM Transport Unit Functions



Source: Capricorn District Municipality (2009); Mashiri et al (2009)

3.8 CDM Transport Unit Funding

3.8.1 Staffing requirements

Establishing a 'new entity' and employing additional staff requires substantial funding (Fuller, 2004). It is envisaged that when the proposed unit is fully functional, it would have a complement of eighteen professionals (Capricorn District Municipality, 2009). A case can be made for a phased uptake of staff by the expanded transport unit, possibly starting with the critical personnel. This approach takes into account the teething problems associated with such transition to a 'new structure' and the need to build capacity and expertise in the intervening period. The salary packages of staff involved will need to be the subject of a proper grading exercise, which would also strongly influence operational costs going forward.

3.8.2 Funding sources

Constitutionally, functions devolved to other spheres of government need to be accompanied by appropriate levels of funding to enable the function to be performed (Krynauw and Van Den Berg, 2005). Unfunded mandates at the district level are often a cause of service delivery failure (Cameron, 2005). In this regard, a transport function financing strategy that would be simple to administer, easy to enforce and acceptable to road users would need to be developed with a view to developing a transportation system that effectively supports the socio-economic activities of the district (Mashiri et al, 2009). Such a strategy should diligently assess transport needs, take into account financing levels that are affordable, set levels of finance for long-term planning and be based on an equitable tax structure. Sources of funding could include, among others, Department of Transport, Limpopo Department of Roads and Transport, local municipalities and own sources. Other avenues of funding projects could include public-private partnerships, community-public-private partnerships, franchising, development and donor funding. Funding could also come from innovative and imaginative sources such as:

- Proactively motivating for and on-ramping secondary projects such as public transport facilities, road safety interventions, etc. along roads being developed by the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) and the Limpopo Roads Agency.
- Law enforcement must aggressively deal with parking and speeding violations by issuing appropriate fines.
- Proactively pursue joint funding among government departments, and
- Introduction of a balanced road user tariff.

It is of interest to note that inputs received from both affected and interested parties suggested that if a separate institution was to be created, the creator would have to fund it. But if it was a joint venture as recommended, all parties would be obligated to contribute. The implication is that there has to be an agreement between LDORT, CDM and its constituent local municipalities with regard to the establishment of the new transport unit.

It was further proposed that a transport function financing strategy that would be simple to administer, easy to enforce and acceptable to road users be designed to secure sufficient funding for the development of an effective transportation system that efficiently supports the socio-economic activities of the district.

3.8.3 *Capacity building and training*

The success of this proposition is predicated upon sustained and targeted capacity building. In this regard, a capacity building plan for the unit needs to be generated complete with specific deliverables. Staff development programs through, for example, bursary and scholarship schemes tying recipients to the transport unit after completion of the course of study could be explored. Establishing memoranda of understanding with training institutions such as universities with a view to providing tailor-made courses, as and when required, could also constitute a legitimate strategic choice.

3.8.4 *Gender mainstreaming*

A window of opportunity exists at the onset of the new entity with regard to deliberately mainstreaming gender into the institutional configuration of the proposed transport unit. A gender mainstreaming plan should be crafted to ensure equitable representation and decision-making in the structure, enabling it to be much more robust, effective and sustainable.

3.8.5 *Key success factors*

CDM needs to borrow, adopt and adapt principles, methods and values of TA operations in strengthening the existing transport function employing the following six key success factors for a transport authority as a departure point:

- Appropriate powers – that will enable the unit to fulfil the municipality’s constitutional imperative
- Adequate resources – to undertake all the envisaged activities (inevitably capacity building is central to the success of the proposed option)
- Dedicated and sustainable sources of funding
- Cooperation from other municipalities and other spheres of government
- Public support, and
- Political will.

It is germane to emphasize that for the proposed unit to be effective it would need to run on business principles (examples of which exist in the public sector), be responsive to day-to-day problems in the transport industry and be in a position to offer timely information, for example, to the travelling public about public transport services, tickets and through-ticketing (Fuller, 2004; Cameron, 2005; Mashiri et al, 2009).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Since the advent of the democratic political dispensation in South Africa in 1994, the nature and functions of municipalities have significantly metamorphosed, with more emphasis being placed on the developmental role of local authorities. Developmental local government means a commitment to working with a cross-section of society to find sustainable ways to meet society’s social, economic and material needs with a view to improving society’s quality of life. The proposed institutional strengthening option, which provides for reconfiguring, capacitating and upgrading the existing CDM transport function, is one such intervention aimed at improving transport service delivery with a view to accord with the aims of developmental local government. It is, at its core, essentially a gradualist approach that could witness overtime the weaning off of this proposed municipal transport unit into a self-sustaining service utility. However, central to strengthening the transport function is the need to put in place an inclusive robust governance structure

underpinned by clear role definition and responsibility allocation, adequate funding as well as undivided and indivisible commitment.

This paper presented a synthesis of the implications for CDM of establishing a transport authority, and concludes that in the context of CDM there is no off-the-shelf structure existing anywhere that could constitute a perfectly fitting model. The proposed CDM transport unit strengthening model would thus have to borrow from, adapt and incorporate experiences from a broad variety of similar local and international institutions. In the process, however, the establishment of what could be a unique and effective transport service delivery platform is indeed within the realm of radiating possibilities. In this regard, some of the key steps and strategic stakeholders that have to be taken on board and the attendant issues have been discussed. Key generic factors that could contribute to the success of a transport unit have been enumerated. What also strongly filters through the discussion is that cordial, mutually reinforcing relationships and effective coordination (including proactively developing and sharing capacities) are indeed cardinal to the smooth functioning and continued growth of the proposed transport unit.

Lastly, similar district municipalities in South Africa and elsewhere in the world can draw the following lessons from this study, namely:

- **Guidelines and indicators:** It is essential upfront to iteratively and inclusively establish clear guidelines and indicators against which transport service delivery can be measured.
- **Benchmarking studies:** Benchmarking studies (locally and internationally) are crucial in providing critical input into policy debate on the feasibility and desirability of strengthening transport units irrespective of context.
- **Funding:** Guaranteed adequate funding or provision of access to instruments of fundraising constitutes the cornerstone of any exercise designed to strengthen a transport unit.
- **Capacity building and training:** Institutional strengthening of a transport unit should be predicated upon and undergirded by focused capacity building and training, and
- **Political will:** Political will and buy-in inclusive of wide representation and incorporation of stakeholder interests and views are paramount in generating the ultimate preferred model.

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