

DISCUSSION PAPER: PROPOSED TOURIST CORRIDOR IN UKHAHLAMBA-DRAKENSBERG – TRANS-MALOTI TREKKING TRAIL Spatial Planning: Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs 22 January 2006.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

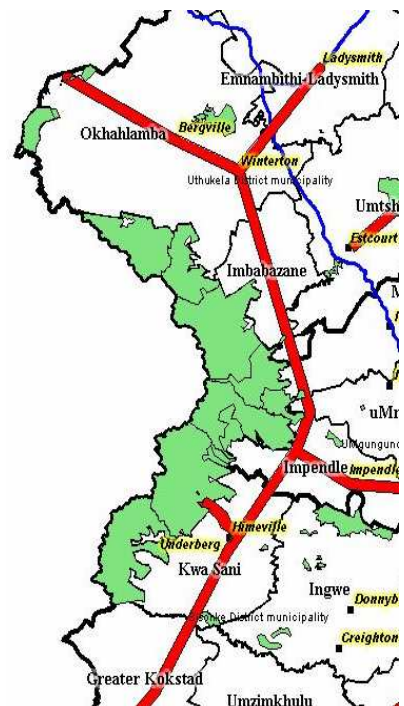
This paper proposes a Trans-Maloti trail as a major element of an economic corridor in the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg region, with considerable socio-economic and environmental benefit.

2. BACKGROUND

In order to achieve the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) objectives, Province's economic cluster has put forward a Provincial Spatial Economic Development Strategy (PSEDS) with intervention priorities. These priorities include development corridors. In the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg region, a proposed corridor is oriented towards tourism.

Coincidentally, flowing from obligations in terms of the World Heritage Convention Act, 1999, a current KZN Wildlife project is investigating desired land uses along the interface of the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Mountain Park (UDMP).

These two initiatives need to be considered jointly - the economic cluster sees a basis of successful intervention as the integrated implementation of several sector department projects. Therefore, this discussion paper looks at the possibility of corridor development in the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg mountain region in a manner that satisfies socio-economic and environmental concerns.



3. THE PROBLEM

This section examines the socio-economic and environmental problems that currently arise in the economic development of the area, underpinned by an inadequate policy framework. However, corridor development may not necessarily resolve these issues and alternative approaches face obstacles that must be resolved.

3.1 Trends in the tourism economy

Firstly, socio-economic marginalization is a widely recognized feature of South Africa's tourism economy. This is reflected in core policy concerns, which include various forms of empowerment (particularly in ecotourism); the promotion of individual entrepreneurship in tourism; and of new SMME opportunities in tourism projects (Rogerson, 2001, p.128). The mountain region follows the national trend - marginalization is widespread across the range of life-style investment estates, larger tourism establishments; smaller B&Bs and self-catering; and camping and caravan facilities.

Played out in space, large-scale facilities frequently command the very desirable areas in close proximity to the entrances to the Mountain Park and in an extreme case, access to the entrance of the World Heritage Site is only possible through a gated estate. Except for rare instances of conscious intervention, communal areas are not integrated into the tourism economy of the mountain region.

Secondly, there is considerable concern that the cumulative impact of tourism facilities and associated infrastructure is undermining the qualities that defined the tourism attraction of the area in the first place – ironically, it is the formal development process, involving larger, high impact projects, that tends to erode the unique character of the region that underpins its tourism product.

Because of trends in the location of the large-scale tourism development, the impact is greatest near the entrances to the Mountain Park.

These trends require careful management. As Zurick (1992) notes, modernization of remote and pristine venues can easily reach a point where the area loses its appeal to tourists. This is because there is often a cyclical pattern to the dynamics of tourism - after the initial exploratory, development and consolidation stages, stagnation sets in as the original attractions are supplanted by artificial ones, and the appeal of the area is lost.

The policy framework, within which these trends arise, is now examined.

3.2 Deficient policy framework

Policies for the area offer a number of useful aspects. However, in the face of these dynamics, the main parts of the policy package do not seem adequate:

Provincial development policy for Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg: Essential elements of the series of Provincial policies (TRPC, 1976; 1981; 1990; 2001) for the area are rooted in the Drakensberg Policy Statement (TRPC 1976). This holding policy was prepared in response to development pressures in the mountain bioregion. The policy recognized:

- A regional gradation of physical development: ‘the further one ventures from the urban areas, the simpler, more nature oriented will the recreation alternatives become, ending in the solitude and ultimate simplicity of wilderness’.
- The stepped topography of the mountains forms natural barriers that support a gradation of physical development – a zonation of accessibility, related to the sensitivity of the land.

While the idea of zonation was perpetuated in later policies, the regional approach to the recreation spectrum weakened. Consequently, despite the many useful features of these policies, major inadequacies include the following:

- Zonation is not a substitute for a development model (although it can assist in the implementation thereof): Zonation is essentially a restrictive mechanism – a sieve that excludes part of the development pressure on an area.
- Provincial development policy does not adequately address the potential impact of cumulative development on the Park interface. As a consequence, sprawling developments on the interface with the wilderness areas have increased.

Municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs): Provincial policy is not applied consistently in integrated development plans. For example, although the Special Case Area Plan (TRPC, 2001, p.61) seeks to prevent ribbon development along the margins of the Mountain Park, some municipal planning promotes this. Moreover, marginalization in the tourism economy is not meaningfully addressed in IDPs.

Municipal property rating: Given the weaknesses of the policy package and perverse incentives inherent in the municipal rating system (i.e. municipalities gain rates from development approvals irrespective of social costs), development management is undermined.

Provincial tourism policy: Approaches to the tourism economy of the mountain region have been ambivalent. On one hand, it is widely recognized that the mountain region is not a mass tourism area; that it supplements mainstream coastal and big-five tourism; and that development requires sensitive management of impact e.g. management of landscape quality. On the other hand, it is said to have potential as a major tourism focus in southern Africa.

Similarly Tourism Strategy 2003 (Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, 2003, p19) feels that: “In the absence of associated product and infrastructural offerings, the Zulu Kingdom brand lacks substance.” However, the Strategy does not fill this need as it remains at the broad level of tourism promotion and removal of obstacles.

Consequently, one may conclude that these various policies are useful but inadequate. As a frequently inconsistent package, they tend towards *laissez-faire*. An effective developmental framework with the regulation of inappropriate development is lacking: for example, since inception of the DFA in 1998, there is no evidence of refusal of a development application in this region (Moffett pers. com).

The developmental consequences are unfortunate - Michael Porter's acclaimed research into competitive advantage supports the argument that a laizzez-faire market does not maximize economic welfare (Konchak and Pascual, 2005). Therefore, will a corridor approach resolve these difficulties?

3.3 Corridors – a 'two-edged' effect

As seen above, socio-economic exclusion is not self-correcting and without appropriate management, the economic and other value of the environment is being eroded. The question arises whether a corridor approach will release the socio-economic and environmental benefits in this context. In order to answer this, some issues associated with corridor development are now examined.

Impact of transport infrastructure

Provision of transport infrastructure is an important part of the corridor approach.

In this regard, Dewar's (1985 p.60) study concluded that the provision of improved and extended road infrastructure, though necessary, will not on its own significantly improve the quality of life of rural dwellers; and that the potential of transport investment can only be realized when transport is seen as only one element in a much broader developmental concept and concern.

Of particular to marginalization, Dewar (p.41 op. cit.) found that improvements and extensions to the road infrastructure in practice benefit a relatively small number of people and these are primarily the elites and better-off.

Invalid assumptions:

...some of the central assumptions underpinning conventional approaches to transport planning and road provision for the peripheral underdeveloped rural regions of South Africa are invalid, particularly: that accessibility is automatically enhanced by improved road infrastructure; that increased accessibility automatically promotes economic development; that current patterns of movement are adequate indications of demand; or that the economies of road provision, and thus the assessment of priorities, can be reduced to road user and maintenance savings costs- more realistically, they must be assessed in terms of their potential to promote or retard development. *Dewar, 1985 p.61*

Tourism corridor and management of tourism stages

South Africa's experience with corridor development through the Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) offers lessons on alternative tourism (as a complement to mass tourism). Of importance, corridors display tourism spaces at different stages in the tourism cycle, with differing infrastructure requirements.

For example, Rogerson (2001 pp.133-4) points out that in terms of tourism product cycles, it is apparent that SDI planning must grapple with the challenges of planning for

the exploration, involvement and development stages for those tourism spaces which are identified as underdeveloped and with potential.

Rogerson adds that the importance of evolving appropriate planning systems, including infrastructure planning, for alternative tourism in rural areas is a significant finding from the international experience. These findings are supported by a Wild Coast case study (Robertson and Fielding, 1997, p.158) which found that investment in movement infrastructure has not accommodated the requirements of the tourism micro-economy.

Spatial organization

In order to get most advantage - and the greatest range of economic opportunity - from an activity corridor, the following is recognized.

Firstly, corridors do not neatly equate with routes but have a necessary thickness of intensification, regionally and locally, that promotes economic diversification in the longer term (Dewar and Kiepiel, 2004, p.50). An inevitable outcome of using a route as a structuring element is that it sets up an implicit system of zonation:

- settlements will tend to concentrate along the route, becoming more urban over time;
- land closest to this market will tend to be occupied by more intensive agricultural users;
- more extensive agriculture will tend to abut this, and;
- primeval or wild land will logically find positions on the periphery (Dewar and Kiepiel, 1997, p.A37).



Similarly for tourism, implications are that the urban space along the route logically supports urban tourism; the rural supports rural or farm tourism; and the primeval supports adventure travel, wilderness experience and so on.

Therefore, in order to obtain greatest benefit, it is critical that the tourism spaces, which are implicitly set up by the route, are aligned with the potential of the tourism resource base.

Secondly, various different activities have their own logical requirements in terms of access. Therefore, the more complex the accessibility surface, the greater the range of opportunities – in this case, potential tourism products. This requires a complex, hierarchical network of access, in which different tourism products are supported by their relative need in terms of accessibility or inaccessibility.

Therefore, the success of the corridor approach also depends on successful linkage of different orders and forms of movement: for example, linking higher order public transport with tracks and paths.

Consequently, appropriate design is essential for release of the full economic potential of a tourism corridor.

Policy context

Although the overall policy framework has weaknesses, a number of issues in the Provincial policies are of value: for example, prevention of ribbon development along the margins of the Mountain Park is a consistent feature of all policies.

The ‘Principles for guiding development of the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg interface’ (DLGTA 2004), commonly terms the ‘DMA principles’, summarize these aspects of value. In addition, research by the Provincial Planning and Development Commission (2007), due for release, has important bearing on corridor development in this region.

Therefore, the corridor approach should be shaped according to the policy context applicable in the region.

Geographic context

Application of an activity route along the face of the Mountain Park also presents practical difficulties. For example, the Himeville-Nottingham Road route, which runs across the grain of the land, has steep gradients and traverses the Park boundary in places. This section would be a high cost, high environmental-impact route with little benefit, limited to the few who can afford private transport (see also Hindson and McCarthy, 1994, p. 132).

Implications

Consequently, corridors do not automatically result in socio-economic and environmental benefits. Corridor development requires conscious design and careful application to the context, in order to release potential advantages. In particular, inclusion of marginalized people needs to be a central issue of the methodology.

Therefore, the corridor concept needs adaptation to the context of the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg region. Otherwise, it may do little for the rural poor. At worst, it may increase inequality within the region; increase environmental impact, including impact upon the tourism base; with sub-optimal use of development capital.

What challenges, then, need to be recognized in a tailored approach for success in this context?

3.4 Challenges of a sustainable, developmental approach

Given that the corridor concept requires adaptation in this context, the following concerns will need to be accommodated:

- The central importance of **control and ownership** in determining the sharing of economic benefits of new tourism projects, pointing to the implementation of community-based tourism and a range of empowerment initiatives involving SMME promotion. (Rogerson (2001, p.134);
- Provision of **infrastructure appropriate** to the needs of SMMEs (Robertson and Fielding, 1997, p.159);
- Restructuring tourism **markets**, in order to get international and local tourists into remote areas;
- Spatially **spreading the impact** of tourism into inaccessible localities without widespread negative impact and destruction of the resource base;
- **Avoidance of intra-regional inequality** that may arise through excessively localized pockets of opportunity. As Rogerson (2001, p.128) notes: “At the core of all these empowerment initiatives is the difficult problem of precisely defining who is ‘the community’ at any point in time”.
- **Mobilization of local investment** in the context of endemic poverty, overcoming shortfall of investment capital. This implies a form of tourism that has relatively small financial costs of starting and maintaining a micro-tourist enterprise, suitable for those of limited means;
- The need for **prolonged engagement with structural obstacles**;
- The **management capacity** of local communities;
- **Security of visitors**.

4. ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

This paper suggests that what is needed is a strong concept that sells itself. The proposed approach centres on an international trekking route that circuits the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg mountains through South Africa and Lesotho. Within the transfrontier theme, the trail system aims at sufficient size and complexity – with sub-circuits and a variety of tourism niches – such that a relatively large international market is captured. This is expanded below.

4.1 The nature and form of tourism

Firstly, expansion of **alternative tourism** is proposed. Alternative tourism is part of current policy thinking (for example, Rogerson, P.129). It is often associated with high levels of SMME participation (Rogerson, 2001a, p. 108) and complements the larger tourism enterprises in the area. Defining features of alternative tourism include these tendencies (Rogerson, 2001a, p108-9):

- small-scale dispersed and low-density development;
- local, often family owned, relatively small scale businesses;
- community participation in planning and strengthening of institutions;
- environmental and cultural sustainability.

Secondly, while alternative tourism takes various forms, it is suggested that the form associated with **dispersed tourism** is appropriate in this context. Rogerson (2001a, p109) notes that this form is based on:

- archaeological attractions,
- ethnic or heritage tourism,
- backpacker tourism,
- village tourism,
- active travelers, and
- adventure tourism including mountain trekking.

Clearly, tourists such as adventure travelers tolerate greater inconvenience and risk than conventional visitors (see also Rogerson and Visser, 2004, p207, 213).

Thirdly, it is suggested that the business style adopted is that of **micro-tourism** as found on the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape (Robertson and Fielding, 1997, p.144-6). Advantages of this approach are that it can be adapted for the development of mountain trekking and related niche tourism, building on existing community responses to tourism in the area.

A particular advantage is that although it is facilitated by community tourism associations (hence the management centres below), it does not involve the problem of identifying a preconceived “community” of beneficiaries (section 3.4, above). As with the trekking industry in Nepal, the trail sets up opportunities - it is an opt-in/opt-out system in which people operate as guides, inn-keepers, tea-shop owners and so on as their need arises.

For success, there is a need for predictable and relatively constant tourist flows displaying sufficient expansion to provide adequate incentives to engage. (Rogerson and Visser, 2004, p.215).

4.2 The tourist product

It is clear that the tourism product needs to be elevated in a different kind of way.

Last century, a National Hiking Way from Limpopo to the Cape was proposed (see for example, TRPC, 1977) and parts constructed e.g. the five-day Giants Cup Hiking Trail between Sani Pass and Bushmans Nek. Presently, the trail serves only the purpose of hiking. While this is certainly not precluded, it is proposed that the concept is expanded to widen its developmental impact. The important factors in redefining the tourism product include these:

Firstly, it is important that the image is created within bounds of authenticity - the value of the region must be based on recognition of the need from which value arises, and the way its value is attenuated by imagery and imagination.

How is the concept of 'associative cultural landscapes' a break through in thinking about heritage resources?

Associative cultural landscapes mark a significant move away from conventional heritage concepts rooted in physical resources. Cultural heritage has been dominated by monuments, while natural heritage has celebrated pristine wilderness. Associative cultural landscapes accentuate the indivisibility of cultural and natural values.

What distinguishes an associative cultural landscape?

While many landscapes have religious, artistic or cultural associations, associative cultural landscapes are distinguished by their associations with the natural environment rather than by their material cultural evidences, which may be minimal or entirely absent. The range of natural features associated with cosmological, symbolic, sacred, and culturally significant landscapes may be very broad: mountains, caves, outcrops, coastal waters, rivers, lakes, pools, hillsides, uplands, plains, woods, groves, trees.

PARKS CANADA http://www2.parkscanada.gc.ca/docs/r/pca-acl/sec2/sec2b_e.asp

In this regard, the region has both **natural and cultural assets** of international significance, which define the World Heritage Site. The indivisibility of the natural and cultural landscapes associated with indigenous people, may be an important part of the tourism image.

Secondly, **KwaZulu-Natal's tourism branding** supports cultural tourism. Research has revealed that the two main disappointments for departing foreign tourists was their lack of ability to interact with traditional culture and heritage, as well as wildlife. Therefore, the development of cultural tourism routes are seen as a catalyst for the opening up of previously disadvantaged areas for further tourism product development. (<http://www.kzn.org.za/tkzn/stratplan2003.pdf>).

Tourism Trends - Sociocultural Aspects:

Research carried out in several countries, in particular a large-scale study by the Stanford Research Institute (California, USA), indicates that there is a clearly defined trend away from an 'outward-directed' lifestyle towards 'inward-directed' and 'integrated' values. Several recent studies indicate that 'post-materialistic values' (growing non-materialistic needs, environmental care, diminishing concerns about career, prestige and status, etc.) will gain in importance. Materialistic lifestyles will not vanish, but a polarization between exponents of material and non-material values is likely to take place.

There is a strong trend leading away from standardization towards an ever greater diversity in lifestyles, inciting new approaches to life and recreation. The limits of mass tourism are recognizable not only from the quantitative, but also from the qualitative point of view.

Moutinho (2000).

Thirdly, the changing nature of 21st century tourism is important. Moutinho (2000) sets out trends such as these:

- Rising market share of low-price accommodation;
- The quest for self-determination and do it yourself;
- Increasing desire to relate to nature, to gain first-hand experience and to engage in active pastimes e.g. trekking holidays;
- The increasing effort to learn, which often manifests itself in serious attempts to get to know foreign cultures;
- Activities, experiences, participation and learning will be key elements in the future;
- Adventure holidays, sports and health trips, sabbaticals and learning holidays will be more popular;
- Demand for 'soft' forms of transport and tourism, including 'back-to-nature' holidays will show a marked increase;
- Increasing numbers of tourists will look for a holistic type of recreation, in search of 'overall balance' of body, soul and mind;
- More and more travelers will define their concept of a 'rich holiday' in terms of the depth rather than in terms of the diversity of their travel experiences.

These factors suggest interesting possibilities for the reconstruction of the tourism image for contemporary purposes: for example, a pristine mountain region that offers a trekking experience in an associative cultural landscape - an experience that may also support the learning of ancient wisdoms. International and local examples portray this:

- A Canadian example is alliance between nature and wellness tourism in the Yukon, a tourist destination with some similar attributes to the mountain region.

De la Barre et al (2005, p.9) conclude that themes that resonate with the Yukon's environment and tourism structure include activities that are best carried out in serene and authentic wilderness environments, and in historical and heritage settings, or where there is an opportunity to discover the spirituality of Aboriginal cultures.

- Locally, Player (2006) proposes “an international centre of spiritual pilgrimage where people come to learn about African culture where all life started and through that, to learn about their inner selves”. This is akin to well-being tourism that Santana (2004) terms a contemporary pilgrimage in the search of the natural essence of human beings.

However, it is important that niche tourism is not limited in scope. While hiking is not precluded, it is recognized that a trekking trail could support a range of niches that are compatible with the context. It is also necessary that the concept finds niche appeal to a broader market and reinforces KwaZulu-Natal's brand and broader campaign.

The issue is one of co-management of a diversity of compatible tourism opportunities around the central component - the trekking circuit. A feasibility study will help to uncover the balance.

4.3 The target market

Given these international trends, an important component comprises international budget travelers, mainly backpackers. This tourist type, as well as local domestic tourists, 'have been virtually ignored by government planners and policy makers' (Rogerson and Visser, 2004, p.185). Largely as a result of their duration of stay, international backpackers spend more money than any other tourist category. They spread their spending over a wider geographic area and bring benefits to remote and otherwise marginalized regions (op. cit. p.187).

However, local hikers are not overlooked, given that the hiking community of South Africa, in total is made up of between 50-60 thousand hikers that hike at least once a year. (http://www.footprint.co.za/Development_introduction.htm).

R100 MILLION RAND PER ANNUM LOCAL INCOME GENERATED BY A TRAIL ECONOMY?

Assuming that these objectives are achieved:

1. A 30 day trail at R50 per person per day (R1500 total expenditure per visitor);
2. Trail usage of 100 persons per day;
3. Trail occupancy of 60%;
4. Local economic multiplier of 3;

Then the trail generates $R1500 \times 100 \times 0.6 \times 3 \times 365$

== R98 550 000 per annum.

4.4 Infrastructure

Investment in movement infrastructure must accommodate the needs of the micro-economy (Robertson and Fielding, 1997, pp.158-9). Main elements of investment in public infrastructure include the following proposals:

- **The trail:** In the first instance, the main trail runs from Bushman's Nek to the Free State border. It weaves in and out of the Mountain Park and communal-private areas. This is followed by extensions into East Griqualand and completion of the major circuit through the Maloti mountains of the Free State and Lesotho. Shorter circuits (e.g. Sani-Bushmans Nek via Sehlabatheba in Lesotho) are identified within the overall circuit.
- **Trekking management centres:** Development of micro-tourism requires locally based management; and state support for initiatives agreed on collectively by local residents, environmental scientists and private enterprise, and should ensure that basic infrastructure such as communications networks, welfare and water supplies, are constructed in a manner that supports the operation of the development model (Robertson and Fielding, 1997, pp.150-1). This suggests development of a series of management centres which:
 - coordinate social, cultural and recreational needs;
 - guide the enhancement of value of natural resources;
 - used as a base by conservation and micro-tourism development managers and researchers;
 - serve as an educational resource centre and information centre by both tourists and local people.
- **Access road upgrade and maintenance** as required in accordance with the concept.
- **Off-grid utility infrastructure:** such as off-grid power and local water supply, which will serve the micro-tourism facilities, would be provided through the current rural housing processes.

Private investment will include micro-tourism facilities (e.g. inns, tea-shops, rustic accommodation) that will arise in the communal areas through current investment processes; and private centres (e.g. Player, 2006) as appropriate to the development concept. Private land owners may wish to establish local trails on their land as part of the overall system.

Public-private partnerships for public transport of budget travelers may be necessary.

These infrastructure requirements need to be integrated into the wider system. The following looks at the way in which this investment could restructure space.

4.5 Spatial concept

The way in which the spatial development of the corridor unfolds is critical to its success or failure as a development tool. As discussed, current trends impact heavily. Economic development is not optimized. SMMEs are crowded out and development is stifled.

The evolution of tourism in the region has to be managed in order to avoid such problems. The concept, that addresses these imbalances, provides a spatial framework for the local management of resources and the development of micro-tourism as the foundation of mountain socio-economic upliftment.

The following is recognized in developing the concept:

Firstly, as intended by the PSEDS, the state must lead in restructuring the space economy.

Secondly, investment in infrastructure has to accommodate the requirements of the micro-economy. In this regard, movement routes are of major importance in structuring activities in rural areas (Dewar, 1985).

Thirdly, interface development should be conceived as an integral component of a wider spatial system, as Provincial policies consistently require.

Fourthly, the spatial logic of the area suggests different emphases for development action.

These different management emphases are supported by different infrastructural investments. This suggests the following:

PRINCIPLES FOR GUIDING DEVELOPMENT...

Access and opportunity: Access to the mountains is particularly important, but cannot imply that all places are equally accessible. Correctly, people's environment is seen as a continuum of urban, rural and primeval (wilderness) places. Therefore, part of the issue of access involves creating a wide range of environmental experiences regionally.

http://devplan.kzntl.gov.za/General/Guidelines/2006Sep28_2/DMA_DEV_PRINCIPLES_draft1june04.pdf

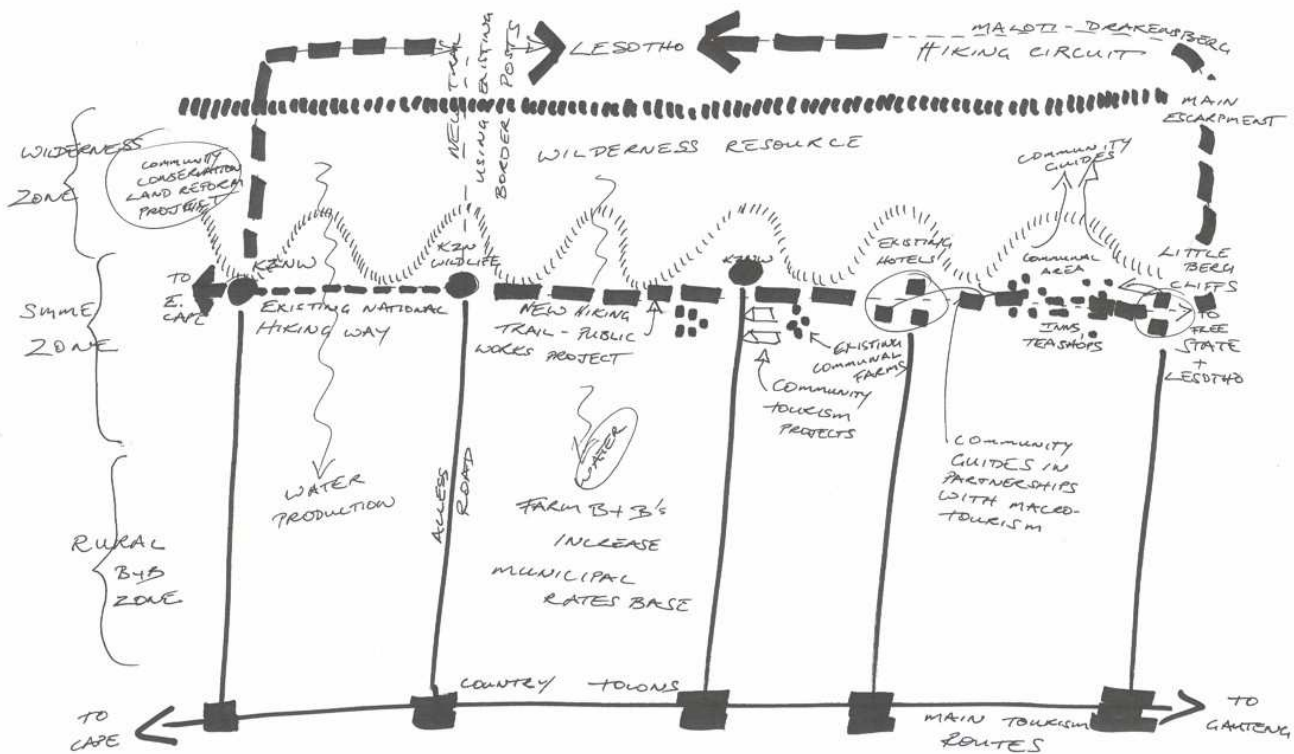
- **The principal route** defines the urban component of the system. This is set back from the mountains in order to create the required gradation of physical development. It links towns such as Swartberg, Underberg, Mpendle, Nottingham Road, Winterton and Bergville into a system of mountain gateways. The route provides the focus for national tourism carriers.
- **Lower-order access routes** take off from the principal route: for example, the gateway to Lotheni via Mpendle. These provide access by local public carriers to the Park entrances – the termini are the nodes in the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg approaches. Clearly, these routes run at right angles to the Mountain Park and not parallel with its boundary.

- **The main trail** parallels the Park interface and becomes a focus and means of travel for the micro-tourism economy. The impact of micro-tourism would be contained by avoiding connector roads along the interface.

The hiking adventure trail, constructed and maintained by local residents, organizes rural space and creates a framework for development of tourist facilities (teashops, inns, local fresh produce outlets). This major adventure travel route brings overseas tourist spending into marginalized areas and restructures the marketing system accordingly. The trail caters for a variety of visitor demands.

It also improves access to schools, clinics and local markets for local people. As Dewar (1985, pp.42-3) observes, “most movement in rural areas takes place over relatively short distances (up to fifteen kilometers) on foot.....Almost no attention is paid to the creation and maintenance of tracks and paths, despite the fact that, as has been shown, the quality of these has a profound impact on the arduousness of rural life”.

FIGURE 1: UKHAHLAMBA - DRAKENSBERG: CONSERVATION - DEVELOPMENT

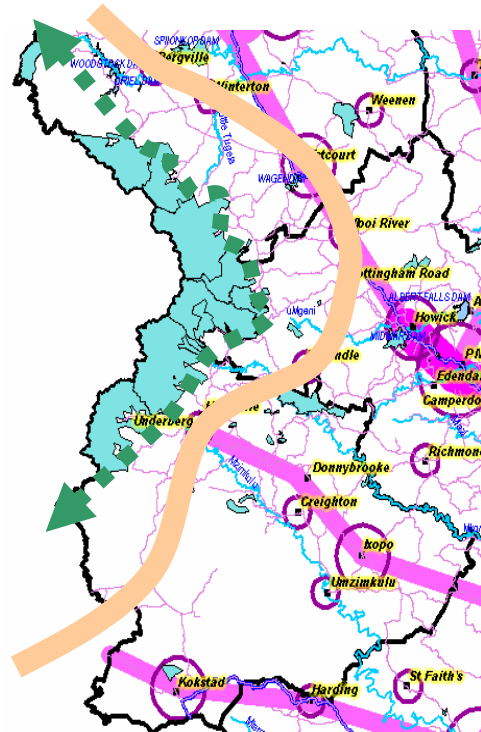


All these elements make up the corridor. The conceptual diagram (Figure 1) shows the breadth of this redefined corridor from the urban system to the wilderness. The sketch map suggests the general alignment of the trekking trail and the urban route.

5. IMPLEMENTATIONAL ISSUES

The following points towards some important implementation issues.

- **Trail funding:** Movement infrastructure for smaller enterprises is funded in the same way that movement infrastructure for the macro-economy is funded. This suggests that KZN Department of Transport should fund the construction and running costs of the trail.
- **Tapping into an international backpacker market:** One challenge in attaining larger tourist flows may 'lie in persuading backpackers flying directly to Australia, to do so via South Africa, or in getting the main flow of backpackers to include South Africa in their itinerary before visiting the south-east Asian countries' (Rogerson and Visser, 2004, p.216). Opportunities may also be explored regarding the economic ties that are strengthening between South Africa and the latter countries.
- **Backpacker access:** As suggested above, it is essential to develop a coordinated public transport system for backpackers - from points of arrival in South Africa (or the main metropolitan areas for domestic tourists) national carriers such as Baz Bus would need to coordinate with local carriers in the mountain subregion.
- **Institutional support:** It is widely accepted that there is no substitute for ongoing engagement with structural obstacles to rural development over a long period. With respect to backpacker tourism, Rogerson and Visser 2004, .p213) point to the problem of inadequate information and support, particularly of an institutional nature. This relates to the following:
- **Trail management:** Implementation of a just environmental economy requires a particular kind of management capacity that probably does not exist in one consolidated entity at present. In developing this capacity, issues such as the following should be included:
 - Development of links (especially by means of state/NGO funded centres e.g. Kamberg and Mweni rock art centres) and partnerships with macro-tourism;
 - joint planning, marketing and partnership with KZN Wildlife;



- development of market associations;
 - development of communications.
- **Learning through doing:** The implementation of projects is also monitored for purposes of learning from experience - case studies are developed and knowledge is fed into the emerging spatial framework.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

It is suggested that the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs obtain support for a feasibility study to be commissioned by them. This may pave the way for applications to the Gijima KZN Business Enabling Fund, which is driven by affected municipalities.

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