

Bay in strong bid for waterfront development

Brian Hayward

bayward@times.co.za

NELSON Mandela Bay is reviving its 20-year-old lobby to transform the Port Elizabeth Harbour into a multi-billion-rand world-class waterfront development.

The municipality has launched an aggressive campaign to get the government to force Transnet to move its port operations, following research which found that a waterfront development was likely to create 120 000 jobs and inject as much as R36.5-billion into the city's annual growth.

Economic Development MEC Mcebisi Jonas has been brought on board and has listed the waterfront development as a key project the provincial government needs to pursue.

A presentation is also planned to take place later this month between the municipality, the Mandela Bay Development Agency (MBDA) and the National Assembly's Public Enterprises

The city regards the development of a waterfront as a major catalytic project

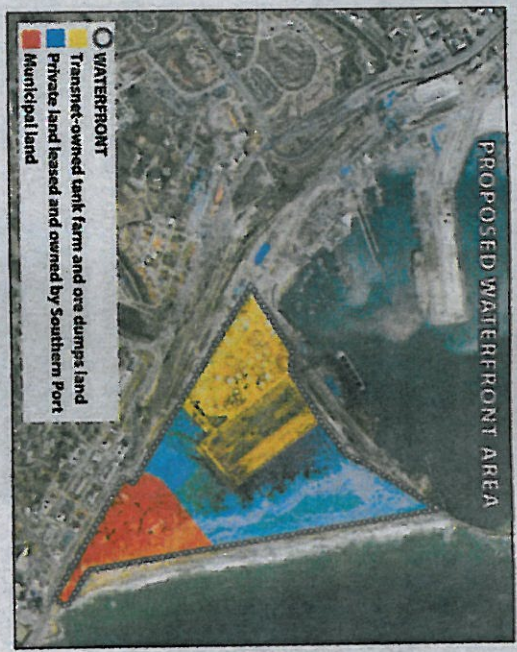
Committee, where an economic plan for the development will be put forward.

Zolile Siswana, executive director of economic development and recreational services – under which the MBDA falls – said it was time to get the city's agenda aligned with that of the national government.

"The city regards the development of a waterfront as a major catalytic project and initiative in its economic development objectives ... a waterfront should become a reality soon.

"Most decisions by Transnet take place at a national level, so we need to engage it at that level. The (national) Public Enterprises and Economic Development departments will be targeted and we will be lobbying them very aggressively in terms of what we want to do and where we want the city to go, to register our agenda nationally."

A portion of the area designated for the waterfront development houses the environmentally hazardous fuel tank farm and manganese ore dumps. Although Transnet has committed to



move them by 2014 and 2016 respectively, it wants the land to be retained for commercial purposes only.

Siswana said it was important for the national govern-

ment to know the city had a sound economic plan for the land and that while Transnet had its plans for the area's use – it has earmarked the land for a car terminal – the

Bay had a right to present its case. "As a city, together with the private sector, we have our own agenda. These things are not necessarily in conflict (with Transnet), but we want to remove the stumbling blocks, and part of those are the ore dumps and tank farms," he said.

"What happens with that land is something we want to engage the national government about, because unless we do that, it will not know (those plans). We need to state right now that we would like the space used for a waterfront development."

The MBDA made a presentation to the National Assembly's Public Enterprises Committee last year, but a new report compiled by re-

REPORT CONTINUES P2