

Council to probe merits of a container dry port at Cato Ridge

THE ETHEKWINI Council has decided to investigate the merits of a container dry port at Cato Ridge in order to make recommendations to the national and provincial governments for a container terminal to be built there.

The decision was reached at a meeting of the full council on May 28 at which a motion put forward by Bluff ward councillor Duncan du Bois was accepted.

The proposal surrounding the construction of a dry port container terminal at Cato Ridge is

aimed at reducing road congestion in and around Durban, and in particular the streets leading to the harbour. In his submission Du Bois pointed out that container traffic to the port of Durban has grown at a rate of some 14 percent a year and that all of this traffic travelled through the South Durban Basin to reach the container terminals.

This proliferation of traffic has resulted in congestion of local roads that were not designed for such traffic volumes, leading to damage to infrastructure such as

road surfaces, stormwater drains, crash barriers and sidewalks, all of which places additional pressure on municipal maintenance departments and the eThekwini budget.

He said the only way to remedy the situation was for an alternative means of moving containers.

The Cato Ridge dry port proposal calls for road vehicles to discharge (and collect) their containers at a new container facility at Cato Ridge.

The boxes would be received into selected stacking areas from

where they would be railed by shuttle train on a dedicated service to the main container terminals in the port. This would remove thousands of heavy road vehicles from Durban streets every day.

In addition the dry port would act as a significant instigator of job creation with additional services being provided for storage and consolidation of cargo, maintenance centres for road vehicles and many other ancillary services associated with cargo working.

Being on the main route to the

port of Durban but also close to the Pinetown, Hammarsdale and Pietermaritzburg industrial complexes means the dry port could be utilised for containers arriving or leaving the port apart possibly for those intended for the immediate Durban central area.

Another major benefit is that it would postpone any need for immediate container terminal expansion at Durban as dry ports have the same administrative, customs and cargo receiving and clearing functions as a seaport.