

**Herald 26/08/2019**

**Caption:** The Proposed Nehemiah Vision Prayer Route.

### **Nehemiah Prayer Route to link Nelson Mandela Bay communities**

Much water has flowed under the bridge since the first fully democratic elections in 1994, yet we seem to have made little progress in connecting the people of Nelson Mandela Bay.

We are still living in the isolated communities created during the apartheid era.

After months of prayer the Lord planted the idea of a Nehemiah Prayer Route in the minds of the leadership of Transformation Christian Network (TCN).

We saw a symbolic electric cable joining all 60 of our municipal wards. The cord became the route joining the wards, with prayer the electrical current that flows through all the wards and powers up transformation.

Key role-players involved are local pastors, ward religious desk leaders, municipal ward Councillors, NGOs, school principals and health clinic managers.

The 200-kilometre route through the wards provides pilgrims, residents of the Bay and tourists alike with the chance to see and experience first-hand the real challenges facing our communities and country.

It will provide us with opportunities to increase the awareness of the needs of every ward in terms of the state of the environment, job opportunities, access to clinics and schools and social cohesion.

The theme of the prayer route will be “telling stories” about the church and the role it has and is playing in NM Bay.

Individual prayer needs for each of the wards are being identified in partnership with local churches – and will bring home to those travelling on the route the very real challenges facing the people of the metro.

There will also be stops at key historic points where both the secular and church history of the metro will be shared.

By broadening the base of potential travellers, the route will provide additional opportunities to share the City’s great Nehemiah vision.

There will be many ways to follow the route – by foot (walking or running), bicycle, motorcycle, car, and bus – depending on the group and the motivation behind following the route (for prayer or out of historical and social interest).

There will be opportunities for tour guides to tell our stories and host groups.

Churches on the route will provide refreshments and toilet facilities, as well as a venue for the sharing of stories.

It is essential that we keep the route simple, uncomplicated and safe.

The tour can be tackled as a whole or in shorter routes.

We are working with the NMBM Tourism Department; private voluntary tourism consultants, public relations and advertising professionals and local church pastors.

We have also decided to approach senior clergy, librarians and museum staff to assist us in compiling the stories of key landmarks and the history of the church and its role in the development of NM Bay.

The entire route has already been mapped out with GPS coordinates. We have agreed not to rush the project but to implement it in phases.

Pastor Thobile Sonjica from New Brighton has made himself available to be trained as the first tour guide.

The launch of the route is planned for November 2019 when Bishop Eric Pike and his wife Joyce have volunteered to walk the 200 km route during the month.

This is a community project, and we invite all churches and Christians in the metro to be involved.

Please share your stories of hope and courage and compassion. Contact Transformation Christian Network on

How you can help realise the vision – please let TCN know how your church can be involved, and what stories you have to share. You will find out contact details at [www.tcn.org.za](http://www.tcn.org.za)

Trevor Jennings, Transformation Christian Network coordinator.