

# APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE WEMBEZI COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON PORTION 51 (OF 7) OF THE FARM KLIPPLAAT DRIFT NO 1009, UTHUKELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

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Background Information Document

October 2021

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to:

- Inform Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) about the proposed project;
- Provide brief background details of the proposed project; and
- Allow interested parties to register their details and provide initial comments on the proposed development

## **Background**

The Klipplaats Family Trust intends to develop a Commercial Centre on Portion 51 (of 7) of the Farm Klipplaats Drift No 1009, uThukela District Municipality. The land is zoned Agricultural in terms of the Town Planning Scheme.

Phase 1 of the development will involve the development of shops, a taxi rank, offices and a service station (storing 69 000 m<sup>3</sup> of fuel) covering an area of about 7 ha.

Phase 2 of the development will involve the creation of eighteen (18) plots to be zoned for light industry, each approximately 0.5 ha (approximately 10 ha in total).

## **The Study**

Metamorphosis Environmental Consultants has been appointed by The Klipplaats Family Trust to undertake an Environmental Authorisation process and submit it to the Provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) as per the requirements of Section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

A legislative review has indicated that the application triggers the requirement for a Basic Assessment under the National Environmental Management Act: GNR 983 (as amended) (Listing Notice 1):

### **Activity 28:**

*“Residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional developments where such land was used for agriculture, game farming, equestrian purposes or afforestation on or after 01 April 1998 and where such development:*

- will occur inside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 5 hectares;*  
*or*
- will occur outside an urban area, where the total land to be developed is bigger than 1 hectare;*

*excluding where such land has already been developed for residential, mixed, retail, commercial, industrial or institutional purposes.”*

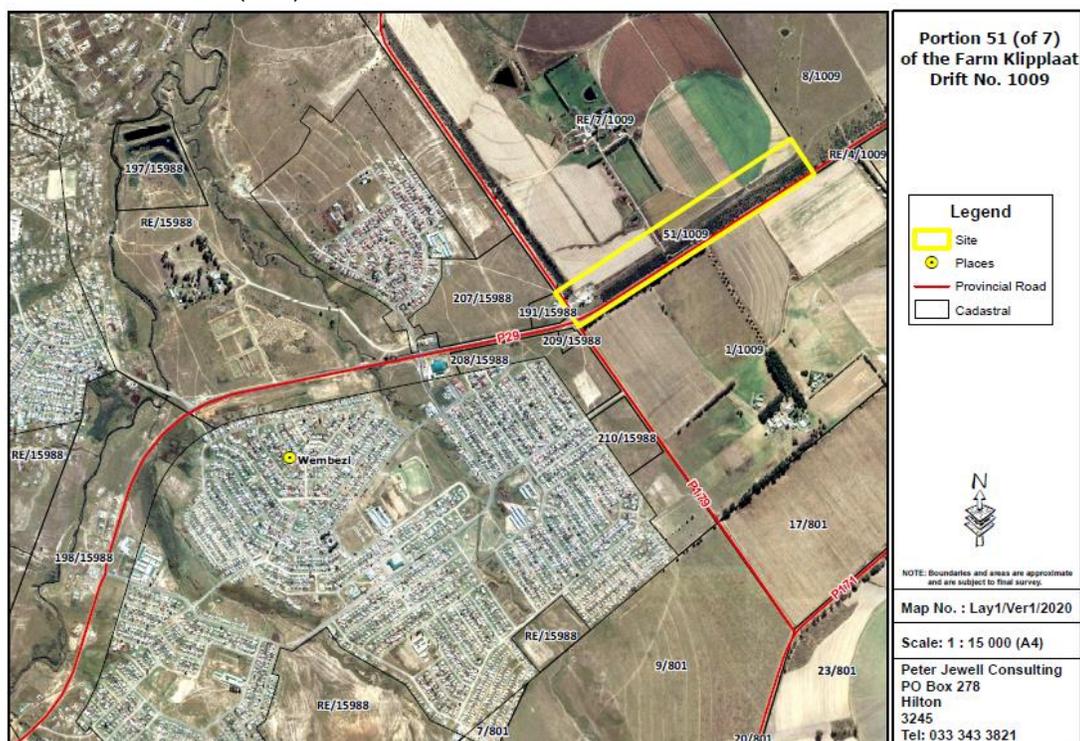
**Activity 56**

"The widening of a road by more than 6 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre—

- (i) where the existing reserve is wider than 13,5 meters; or
- (ii) where no reserve exists, where the existing road is wider than 8 metres; excluding where widening or lengthening occur inside urban areas.

**Location of the Site**

The proposed development is located near Wembezi, to the south west of Estcourt. The coordinates of Portion 51 (of 7) are 29°02'21" S and 29°48'00" E.



**Figure 1: Location of Proposed Development**

**Description of the Proposed Development**

The property covers an area of just under 20 ha.

The development proposal is as follows:

Phase 1 of the development will involve the creation of a petrol filling station (PFS) (storing 63 000 m<sup>3</sup> of fuel) and a retail centre (with a total area 12 363 m<sup>2</sup>): comprising a convenience shop for the PFS (250 m<sup>2</sup>), shops, offices (12 113 m<sup>2</sup>), a taxi rank and associated access roads and parking bays covering an area of about 7 ha.

The PFS will have one underground diesel storage tank and two underground petrol storage tanks (total storage capacity: 69 000 m<sup>3</sup>); an ablution block and offices.



### **Bulk services**

Access roads: The development is located on the corner of the P29 and the P179. Both roads are already existing tarred surfaces. Access to the site will be off the P179 which will be upgraded and the intersection of the roads will also be upgraded as per the requirements of the Traffic Impact Assessment.

Water: Potable water will be supplied by the local authority, Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality. The maximum / peak requirement is 1,94 litres / second.

Wastewater: Wastewater will be discharged to the existing sewer, operated and provided by the local authority, Inkosi Langalibalele Municipality. The maximum / peak requirement is 1,9 litres / second.

The design for stormwater management on site will be included in the final proposal.

A number of Specialist Studies have been undertaken as part of the Environmental Authorisation process, these include:

- Heritage Impact Assessment;
- Traffic Impact Assessment;
- Palaeontological Impact Assessment;
- Ecological Assessment; and
- Geotechnical;
- Geohydrological;
- Engineering (including stormwater).

### **Brief description of Receiving Environment**

Below is a brief summary / conclusion for each specialist study undertaken to date. These will be detailed in the Basic Assessment Report (BAR).

#### Heritage Impact Assessment:

“No heritage sites or features occur on the footprint. The area is also not part of any known cultural landscape. The proposed development may proceed from a general heritage perspective. There is no need for any mitigation.”

#### Traffic impact Assessment:

“The proposed development can be supported from a traffic and transportation perspective, provided the recommended road network improvements are implemented. These include:

- The intersection of P29 and P179 to be converted to a signalised intersection;
- Sidewalks to be provided along the P179 frontage and along the access road;
- Street lighting is required; and
- Public transport facilities to be provided.

#### Palaeontological Impact Assessment:

“Based on experience and the lack of any previously recorded fossils from the area, it is extremely unlikely that any fossils would be preserved in the ploughed soils that cover the entire project site.”

#### Ecological Assessment:

“The 15 ha site was irreversibly modified and:

- No representative examples of KZN Highland Thornveld were identified;
- The few small patches containing secondary grassland species were unsuitable for supporting faunal species of conservation concern; and

- Therefore of low value as an ecological corridor.

The entire site was suitable for a few common species of fauna and there were no faunal constraints to development of the site or any portions thereof.”

Geotechnical:

Report still pending.

Geohydrological:

Report still pending.

As determined by the specialist studies, the site is not located within a ‘sensitive area’ or near a watercourse.

In terms of the National Water Act (36 of 1998) as amended, the facility will not need a Water Use Licence: potable water will be supplied by the local authority; wastewater will be disposed to sewer; no watercourse will be affected by the development; and no waste will be discharged into the environment.

### **Impacts and mitigation**

During the Process issues and potential impacts of the project on the environment (and *vice versa*) are identified by way of field investigations, desktop studies and interaction with I&APs. Key issues and impacts requiring further investigation are addressed by specialist studies and/or further detailed input from the environmental and technical teams. Specialist studies are guided by the Terms of Reference to ensure that issues and associated impacts are correctly identified, understood and addressed, thereby enabling an integrated assessment of the development proposal.

Mitigation measures will be identified with inputs from I&APs, the specialists, the design engineers and the EAP team. Information will be collated, evaluated and integrated. Thereafter, the significance of each impact will be assessed using the assessment conventions outlined in the table below (in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations). It should be noted that the significance of an impact is a function of all the attributes outlined in the table below, and the relationships between them.

The assessment conventions will be applied qualitatively by the EAP, based on an understanding of the receiving environment, the proposed project components and activities, and the information gathered from different sources, including specialists and the public.

### **The Environmental Authorisation (EA) Process**

**The following steps must be carried out in order to obtain an EA:**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Status as at 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021 / Target Date</b>
1. The proponent appoints an Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) (Ms Vicki King: Metamorphosis Environmental Consultants)	April 2021
2. EAP to submit the draft EA Application, the Screening Tool Report and the Site Layout plan submitted to EDTEA	12 June 2021
3. Pre-Application Meeting on-site with EDTEA	28 July 2021

4. EDTEA to confirm which Specialist Reports are required	28 July 2021
5. BA process to proceed including public participation	In progress
6. Public Participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EAP to identify I&amp;APs (neighbours, authorities, organisations)</li> <li>• EAP to draw up and maintain an I&amp;AP database</li> <li>• EAP to draw up flyers, advert, posters and the Background Information Document (BID)</li> <li>• EAP to place the advertisements in the Isolezwe and the Estcourt News</li> <li>• EAP to erect Posters</li> <li>• EAP to distribute BID to all identified I&amp;APs</li> <li>• EAP to register any additional I&amp;APs</li> <li>• EAP to record issues / comments received from I&amp;APs</li> </ul>	Ongoing Ongoing 20 September 2021  8 October 2021  8 October 2021 8 October 2021 8 November 2021 Ongoing
7. EAP to compile the draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) and the draft Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) and to submit both reports to all registered I&APs and to EDTEA for comments (for 30-day period)	15 October 2021
8. EAP to receive and incorporate all comments received from I&APs	15 November 2021
9. EAP to submit the EA application to EDTEA	22 November 2021
10. EAP to compile the Final BAR and Final EMPr and to submit it to the EDTEA and I&APs for approval	22 November 2021
11. Await BA approval and EA from EDTEA	Dec 2021 / Jan 2022
12. Appeal process	Jan / Feb 2022

### **Next step in the process**

A four week registration period will be allowed for individuals to formally register their full details and send any comments on the proposal. All registered I&APs will be kept informed as the process progresses and will be sent all relevant documentation.

If deemed necessary, focus group meetings will be held with key interested or affected parties as appropriate.

If you wish to register as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP) please complete the form overleaf.

**POPI Act: By registering as an I&AP, you consent to the purpose specific use of your information: your name and contact details will be given to competent authority, as per the requirements of the NEMA EIA Regulations.**

