

## NEED AND DESIRABILITY STATEMENT – POOLE'S BAY CONNECTION PATH, HERMANUS

The following points relate to need and desirability as considered in the DEA Guideline on Need and Desirability (2017):

- The site will not impact on terrestrial biodiversity or conservation targets as it is already degraded and transformed. According to the SANBI Biodiversity Advisor the biodiversity target is the minimum proportion of each ecosystem type that needs to be kept in a natural or near-natural state in the long term to maintain viable representative samples of all ecosystem types and the majority of species associated with those ecosystems. The biodiversity target is calculated based on species richness, using species–area relationship, and varies between 16% and 36% of the original extent of each ecosystem type (<http://biodiversityadvisor.sanbi.org/planning-and-assessment/plant-conservation-strategy/target-4/>).
- It is located inside an urban area, surrounded by existing urban development on the one side and the sea on the other and the proposed path would support the land use in the surrounding area.
- Ecological sensitivities of significance on or in the immediate site surrounds were investigated by specialists and the area was found to be not as pristine as is perceived.
- The Fernkloof Nature Reserve and Walker Bay whale sanctuary (seasonal MPA) borders onto the site, but it would not be affected by the proposed development. The existing Cliff path passes through the Fernkloof Nature Reserve, thereby it is submitted that connection of the Cliff path would enhance the experience of the overall path by adding a section below the HWM.
- Waste management specifications that take account of the prevent, reduce, reuse, recycle, dispose hierarchy are included in the Environmental Management Programme. It is premised that the connection path would also contribute to management of plastic pollution from the ocean, which is a concerning issue. The path would facilitate beach clean-ups in this particular area.
- Typical impacts associated with such developments are generally known and easily managed. This Basic Assessment served to contextualise these impacts to the site specifics. There were no apparent gaps in knowledge to suggest that impact identification and assessment were not based on a risk averse/cautious approach.
- Negative impacts associated with the development are limited and of low significance, and most can be avoided altogether or limited to acceptable levels.
- All positive and negative direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the biophysical and social environment have been clearly documented in Section H of the Basic Assessment Report.
- There will be no unacceptable opportunity costs or any impact of significance that would negatively affect the health and/or wellbeing of the surrounding community.
- A thorough public participation process is being undertaken to inform the assessment, which is also indicating significant support for the project, alluding to a strong public desire to access Poole's Bay safely.
- The development will serve to support local land users in the area, as well as non-locals. The popularity of the existing cliff path is testament to the need and desirability for completion of it in this location.
- The site is located on public coastal property and not subject to land use applications. There are no known restrictions in existing land use rights that prohibit the development of a path, subject to landowner consent (through Seashore lease, administered by CapeNature)
- The Western Cape Provincial Spatial Development Framework (2009) (PSDF) does not extend to project level, however the proposal does not conflict with any of the spatial goals and objectives of the PSDF.

- Overstrand Integrated Development Plan (2017-2021) regards tourism as a key economic driver. Connecting the existing Cliff path would support a landmark tourism attraction in the area. Since the development of the path would not be financed through municipal resources, it would not put pressure on municipal revenue. Certain ward priorities are also for upgrading the Cliff path (Voelklip), thus a connection would support such initiative.
- The attraction of visitors to the area necessitates the need for supporting infrastructure, such as the proposed pathway through a more rugged area of the coast line in Hermanus. As indicated, the proposed connection path would be an enabler in this regard.
- The Overstrand Integrated Development Plan includes the Environmental Management Framework for the local area and notes the effects of climate change, which includes mean sea level changes, as well as the frequency of storm events, consideration of which has been included in the conceptual design to provide for a more robust and durable structure.
- Findings and recommendations from Specialist studies that were undertaken during 2019, 2020 and 2021 were incorporated into the mitigation measures in the Basic Assessment Report and Environmental Management Programme and it informed the formulation of the preferred layout alternative.
- The area through Poole's bay is already informally used by hikers. As such, it is believed that this proposal constitutes a development that would enhance use of the area and add value to the existing cliff path.

The above factors as well as the congruence of the proposal with coastal management policy clearly demonstrates the activity as appropriate at this point in time (i.e. there is a need for the activity), and that the activity is appropriate in the context of its environmental setting (i.e. the activity is desirable in this location).