EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT
RIVER CLUB REDEVELOPMENT, CAPE TOWN

DEA&DP Reference Number: 16/3/3/6/7/2/A7/17/3104/16
HWC Case Number: 15112504WD1217E
DWS Reference Number: WU9026 River Club and 16/2/7/G22/A/11

1 INTRODUCTION

The Liesbeek Leisure Properties Trust (LLPT or the proponent) owns the River Club in Observatory, Cape Town. The LLPT operates the River Club as a commercial facility, mainly for recreational (golfing) activities and conferencing. The LLPT is proposing to redevelop the River Club property and portions of adjacent properties, including portions of the original course of the Liesbeek River and Liesbeek Canal (collectively referred to as the site[1] - refer to Figure 1) for commercial, retail, residential, institutional and associated uses (the project or development). Most of the site (i.e. the River Club property) is owned by the proponent.

It is the proponent's intention to re-imagine and develop the site as a vital "destination place" in Cape Town and as the western gateway to the Two Rivers Urban Park (TRUP). The proponents would like to see this gateway development at the River Club accommodate a medium to high density, mixed-use agglomeration of uses which supports the vision of 'live, work, play' while retaining certain recreational and ecological aspects.

The total footprint of the proposed development is ~21 ha. It includes two development precincts, and comprises buildings, between four and 10 storeys high with a footprint of ~ 4.5 ha, soft landscaping (i.e. a park or ecological corridor separating the two precincts, and setbacks and rivers) and hard landscaping (i.e. covered pedestrian space, foot and cycle paths, and service infrastructure) which will cover ~9.3 ha and ~4 ha respectively (including almost 70% of the River Club), and roads with a footprint of ~3.2 ha (refer to Figure 3). The redevelopment and / or rehabilitation of degraded adjacent freshwater systems is also proposed (refer to Section 5 below).

SRK Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd (SRK) has been appointed by the LLPT to undertake the Basic Assessment (BA) process required in terms of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA). The BA process was undertaken in accordance with Section 23 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014 (GN R982, as amended by GN R326).

See page 7 for details on how you can participate in the process.

[1] The site comprises portions of thirteen properties. LLPT proposes to rezone Erf 151832 (the property that LLPT owns) from Private Open Space Zoning to Sub-Divisional Area Zoning, subdivide and develop the site in six main phases.

2 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Sections 24 and 44 of NEMA make provision for the promulgation of regulations that identify activities which may not commence without an Environmental Authorisation (EA) issued by the competent authority, in this case, the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP). The EIA Regulations, 2014 , promulgated in terms of NEMA, govern the process, methodologies and requirements for undertaking of EIAs in support of EA applications. The EIA Regulations are accompanied by Listing Notices (LN) 1-3 that list activities that require EA.

The EIA Regulations, 2014, lay out two alternative authorisation processes. Depending on the type of activity that is proposed, either a BA process or a Scoping and Environmental Impact Reporting (S&EIR) process is required to obtain EA. LN 1 lists activities that require a BA process, while LN 2 lists activities that require S&EIR. LN 3 lists activities in certain sensitive geographic areas that require a BA.

SRK has determined that the proposed project triggers activities listed in terms of LN 1 and LN 3 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, requiring a BA.

Table 1: Listed activities triggered by the project

No	Description
LN 1 (requiring BA)	
19	The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 10 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 cubic metres from a watercourse.
LN 3 (requiring BA)	
15	The transformation of land bigger than 1000 square metres in size, to residential, retail, commercial, … or institutional use, where, such land was zoned open space, conservation or had an equivalent zoning, on or after 02 August 2010 in areas zoned for conservation use in urban areas in the Western Cape (*a portion of the project footprint is located in an area zoned as "Buffer 1" and "Core 2" in the Table Bay District Plan and as "Biodiversity Protection Spatial Planning Category" in the CoCT SDF although no natural vegetation exists here*).
18	The widening of a road by more than 4 metres, or the lengthening of a road by more than 1 kilometre in areas zoned for conservation use (*a portion of the project footprint is located in an area zoned as "Buffer 1" and "Core 2" in the Table Bay District Plan and as "Biodiversity Protection Spatial Planning Category" in the CoCT SDF although no natural vegetation exists here*).

A Water Use Licence in terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act 36 of 1998 (NWA) will be required from the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS). Water use activities that may be applicable to the project are listed in Table 2.

Table 1: NWA water use activities triggered by the project

No	Description
c	Impeding or diverting the flow of water in a watercourse.
e	Engaging in a controlled activity (such as irrigating with treated effluent).
g	Disposing (or storing) of waste in a manner which may detrimentally impact on a water resource.
i	Altering the bed, banks, course or characteristics of a watercourse.

Heritage comment is also required from Heritage Western Cape (HWC) in terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA). Section 38(1) of the NHRA specifies activities that trigger the need for heritage comment. The proposed redevelopment triggers a number of these activities (listed in Table 3) and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been undertaken for the development.

Table 2: NHRA listed activities triggered by the project

No	Description
a	Construction of a road, wall, power line, canal or other similar form of linear development or barrier over 300 m in length
b	Construction of a bridge or similar structure exceeding 50 m in length.
c	Any development or activity that will change the character of a site (i) exceeding 5 000 m² in extent, (ii) involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof.
d	Rezoning of a site exceeding 10 000 m² in extent.

In terms of Section 38(8), the consenting authority (in this case DEA&DP) must ensure that the HIA fulfils the requirements of HWC, and that the comments and recommendations of HWC have been taken into account prior to granting EA.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

The EIA Regulations, 2014 define the detailed approach to the BA process (see Figure 2). The current stage of the process is Pre-application Phase stakeholder engagement.

The objectives of the BA process are to:

- Identify relevant authorities and key stakeholders to engage in the stakeholder engagement process;
- Disclose information to authorities and stakeholders and provide them with an opportunity to raise issues or concerns;
- Identify potential issues and environmental impacts;
- Assess the significance of the potential environmental impacts identified;
- Describe and investigate alternatives that have been and / or could be considered; and

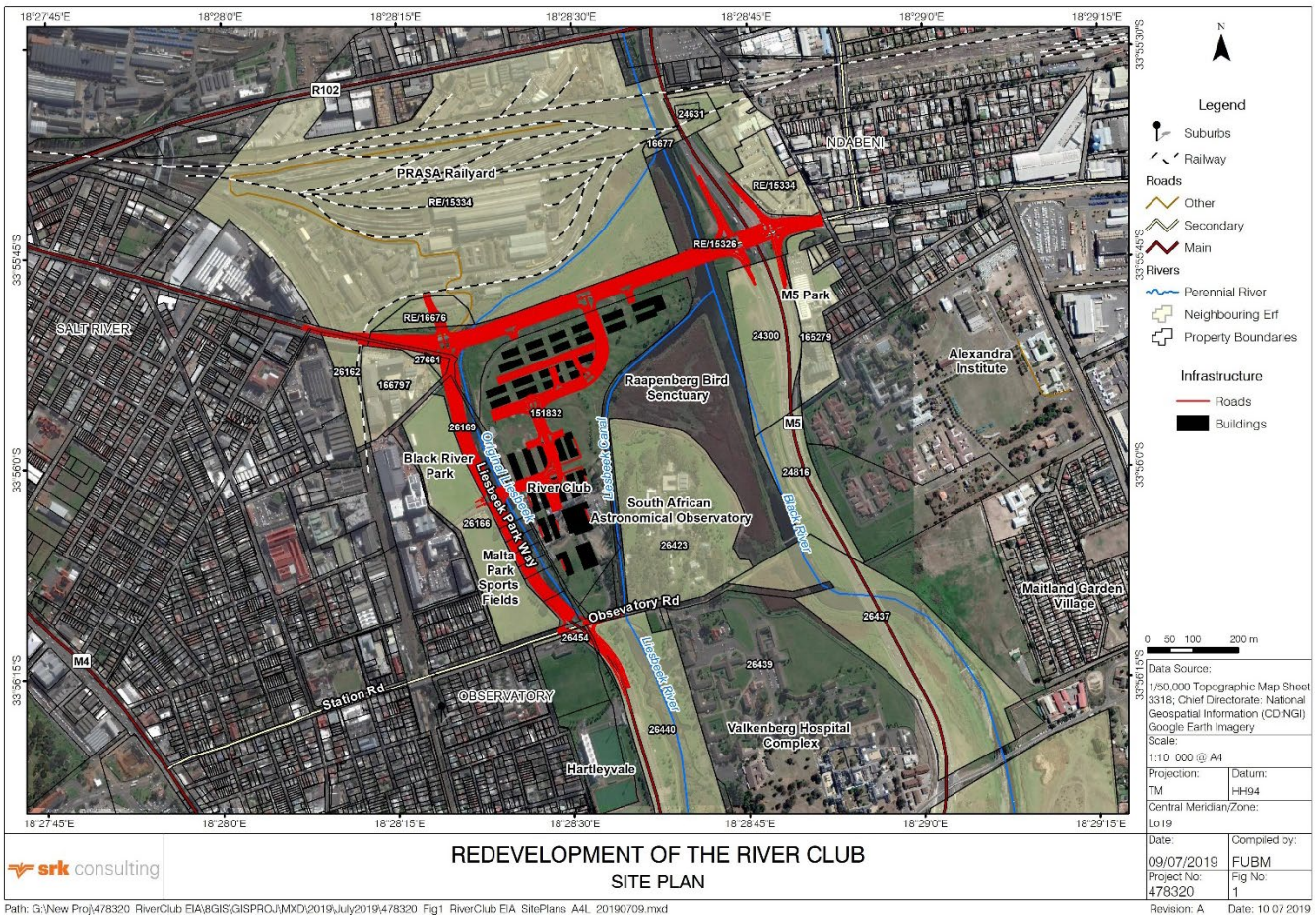

Figure 1: Site Plan

- Provide feasible mitigation measures to address any significant impacts identified.

These objectives are achieved through technical evaluation of the proposed activity, the stakeholder engagement process and submission of the relevant documentation to DEA&DP.

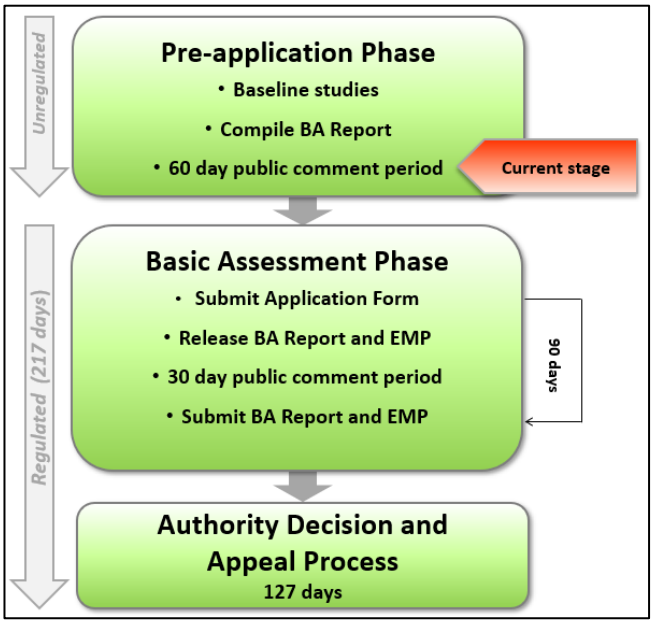

Figure 2: BA Process

***Note:** EMP = Environmental Management Programme*

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ENVIRONMENT

The site is located in the suburb of Observatory in Cape Town, less than 5 km from the Cape Town Central Business District.

Liesbeek Parkway (south), Albert Road (north-west) and Station Road (west) provide access to the site (ultimately via Observatory Road to the south). Although the M5 runs almost parallel to the eastern boundary of the site, access from the M5 is not currently possible.

The site is zoned as *Private Open Space* and is currently predominantly used by the proponent as a commercial rental enterprise with tenants comprising a golf driving range with a "mashie" 9-hole golf course in the north-east of the site, conference and function venue, restaurant and bar, and other tenants. Beyond the mashie golf course is vacant land owned by the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA).

Figure 3 shows the River Club building (the main building) that has been converted into a recreational and conference facility: it has been assessed to be of low heritage significance, because of the unremarkable nature of the structure and extent to which the building has been transformed.

Figure 3: The River Club Main Building

There are a variety of land uses in the areas surrounding the site (outlined in yellow – see Figure 4) with residential, commercial, institutional and industrial activities interspersed with open spaces for passive use and recreation.

The PRASA rail yard is located immediately north of the site with related industrial activities further north.

The Liesbeek Parkway (road) abuts the site's western boundary with sports fields (Malta Park) and the Black River Park commercial development, beyond that. A railway line, light industry and the residential areas of Observatory and Salt River are located further west (see Figure 4).

Raapenburg Bird Sanctuary Nature Reserve, situated on the banks of the Black River, is located to the immediate east of the Liesbeek River Canal. The M5 runs parallel to the site east of the Black River. The Maitland and Ndabeni industrial areas, a commercial development (M5 Park), the Alexandra Hospital and the Maitland Garden Village are located east of the M5.

The SAAO, a Grade I Heritage Site, is situated on a low ridgeline immediately east of the southern portion of the site and the Liesbeek River Canal. The Valkenburg Hospital Complex is situated south-east of the site and south of the Observatory.

In 1952 the Liesbeek River was canalised and diverted south-east of the site to form the south eastern site boundary. Later, the "original course of the Liesbeek" west of the site was fully reclaimed and infilled; and in the late 1980s it was dredged to allow water to backflow from the Black River. This course of the Liesbeek River now forms the western site boundary. The Black River forms the north eastern site boundary (see Figure 4).

The site was subsequently further infilled with waste and rubble and used for recreational activities. Nevertheless, most of the site is below the 1:100 year floodplain.

Figure 4: Surrounding land use

Canalisation of the Liesbeek River in the 1950s significantly reduced natural flow in the original course, shallowing the water body which in turn has facilitated the invasion of alien aquatic plants that restrict use of the waterbody by indigenous birds. The original course of the Liesbeek is assessed to be of Moderate local sensitivity, and the Black River and Liesbeek Canal are assessed to be of Low and Very Low local sensitivity.

No wetlands occur on the site, though several are located in the vicinity. Of particular local ecological importance is the Raapenburg Wetland located to the east.

Although terrestrial areas at the site are transformed from an ecological perspective, the site provides refuge and a mobility corridor for the *Endangered* Western Leopard Toad. The only other faunal Species of Conversation Concern that may occur at the site or in surrounding freshwater environments is the Cape Dwarf Chameleon (*Endangered*), the Great White Pelican and the Greater Flamingo (both rated as *Near-Threatened*, but not known to breed at the site).

5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The key elements of the project are as follows:

- Infilling of portions of the site in the floodplain, and rehabilitation of river banks and the installation of service infrastructure;
- Redevelopment of the site south of the proposed Berkley Road Extension;
- A two-lane extension of Berkley Road over the Black River;
- A new bridge linking the site to the Liesbeek Parkway at Link Road over the original course of the Liesbeek River;
- Widening of the Berkley Road Bridge over the Black River, the widening of the Berkley Road extension, and the extension of Berkley Road from the site entrance to the west over the original course of the Liesbeek River to join Malta Road and the Liesbeek Parkway;
- Widening of the Liesbeek Parkway into the original course of the Liesbeek River, between Station Road and Link Road; and
- Widening of the Liesbeek Parkway into the original course of the Liesbeek River, between Malta Road and Link Road.

The development will be built in six phases in two precincts. Portions of major roads required to service the development, and services will be installed during the first phase. Precinct 1 will be developed in the south of the site and will consist of buildings of between four and nine storeys, and Precinct 2 will be developed to the north and will consist of buildings of between six and 10 storeys. The phasing of the precincts will depend on market demand. A recreational corridor (or park) with ecological function will be located between the two precincts.

The proposed development includes (see Figure 3):

- **Buildings for commercial, retail and residential use[2],** occupying approximately 4.5 ha;
- **Hard landscaping,** including covered pedestrian space, roads, recreation and leisure facilities, service infrastructure and courtyards, occupying approximately ~4 ha;
- **Open space,** including the rehabilitation of the Liesbeek Canal, ecological setbacks, the infilled original course of the Liesbeek River and an ecological corridor separating the two precincts to facilitate (and improve) faunal mobility, occupying approximately ~9.3 ha;
- **Waste management facilities,** collection, sorting, temporary storage and collection areas;
- **Water supply infrastructure,** supplying potable water to buildings through pipeline connections;
- **Electrical infrastructure,** two ring feed loops (one for each precinct) and a substation;
- **Stormwater infrastructure,** vegetated stormwater swales underlain by a piped drainage network;
- **Sewerage infrastructure**; and
- **Roads and parking,** comprising surfaced access and internal roads, bridges some surface parking, basement parking and traffic management infrastructure (e.g. traffic circles) occupying approximately 3.2 ha.

It is anticipated that the development would entail a capital investment of approximately R4 billion and would deliver

[2] At least 20% of the leasable area at the development will be allocated to residential use, and 20% of the residential area at the development will be inclusionary accommodation for households with a prescribed income bracket.

more than R40 million in rates and taxes to the CoCT annually.

6 ALTERNATIVES

Appendix 3 Section 3 (h)(i) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, requires that all BA processes must identify and describe feasible and reasonable alternatives. Alternatives considered during screening phases of the project, include:

Location/Site Alternatives: The proponent owns the majority of the site, and the unique characteristics and location of the site are central to the project motivation. The consideration of alternative sites is not possible as no other site is available to the proponent for a development of this nature.

"Mixed Use Affordable" and "Reduced Floor Space" Alternatives: Alternatives that included a) reduced floorspace / footprint for the development, and b) a higher allocation to residential use in the development scheme. Based on a financial feasibility analysis, LLPT determined that these alternatives are not financially viable (feasible) and were therefore excluded by the proponent from further investigation.

Layout Alternative Iterations: The layout has been refined through a number of iterations in response to a number of aspects, including, *inter alia*, the ecological status of the site, potential inundation, cultural and heritage factors, traffic and access, urban plans, as well as commercial and technical considerations. Six previous iterations of the preferred development alternative are presented in the BA Report.

Layout Alternatives Under Consideration: Two were considered in the BA process, the **Riverine Corridor Alternative** (the preferred alternative), and the **Island Concept Alternative**. The **Riverine Corridor Alternative** includes the rehabilitation of the Liesbeek Canal as a watercourse with public amenity, the infilling of the original course of the Liesbeek River (where it fronts the site) as a vegetated stormwater swale (with ecological function) and a reduction of the heights of buildings directly fronting the SAAO, while the **Island Concept Alternative** largely retains freshwater features surrounding the site in their current configuration.

The No-Go alternative will involve the continuation of the status quo, i.e. existing activities and uses will continue in terms of existing rights, as well as any new development that can occur within the existing rights without new statutory approvals. Negative impacts (mostly heritage and visual) would be forgone, as would significant ecological and socio-economic benefits.

7 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Potential impacts associated with the project were assessed according to SRK's standard Impact Assessment methodology. For all potentially significant impacts, the significance of the anticipated impact was rated without and with recommended mitigation measures. Impact significance ratings for the two alternatives under consideration are presented in Table 2, which summarises:

- The impacts assessed in the BA Report; and
- Their significance with mitigation or optimisation.

Impact Significance Rating Legend:

Rating	+ve	-ve
Insignificant	I	I
Very Low	VL	VL
Low	L	L
Medium	M	M
High	H	H
Very High	VH	VH

The assessment of impacts on traffic, stormwater hazard, biodiversity (botany, avifauna, herpetology and freshwater ecology), heritage and visual were informed by specialist investigation.

Table 2: Summary of Impacts

Impact	Significance rating	
	Riverine Corridor	Island Concept
CONSTRUCTION PHASE IMPACTS		
Nuisance from dust and noise	VL	VL
Water contamination and deterioration of (aquatic) habitat quality	L	VL
Loss of riverine wetlands along the Black River margin	VL	VL
Faunal mortalities	L	L
Change in aquatic (faunal) habitat quality	L	L
Change in terrestrial (faunal) habitat quality	L	L
Change in faunal connectivity	L	L
Change in floral species composition	L	L
Economic growth	H	H
Increased employment, income and skills development	M	M
Delays to road users	M	M
Loss or damage to palaeontological and archaeological resources	VL	I
Loss of structures on the site with heritage value	L	L
Altered sense of place	L	L

Table 2: Summary of Impacts (continued)

Impact	Significance rating	
	Riverine Corridor	Island Concept
OPERATIONS PHASE IMPACTS		
Change in flood hazard	VL	VL
Changes to habitat quality and ecological functioning of:		
The Liesbeek Canal	H	VL
The Liesbeek River	L	L
The Raapenburg Wetland	I	I
Contamination of the Liesbeek and Black Rivers	L	L
Changes to habitat quality in rehabilitated areas	I	I
Faunal mortalities	L	L
Increased employment, income and skills development	M	M
Increased government revenue	M	M
Increase in housing	L	L
Densification facilitating improved connectivity, transport systems and TRUP implementation	M	M
Change in public amenity value	M	M
Increase in property values	L	L
Gentrification	L	L
Change in the quality of life	I	I
Pressure on service provision	I	I
Delays to road users during (following partial upgrade by the LLPT)	M	M
Change in travel times (following all upgrades by CoCT)	M	M
Change in historical character of the site	L	L
Change in heritage value Liesbeek River floodplain at the site	M	M
Changes in historical setting of the SAAO	H	VH
Altered sense of place	M	M
Visual intrusion	M	M

Key recommendations, which are considered essential, are:

- Implement the Environmental Management Programme (EMP) to guide construction and operations activities and to provide a framework for the ongoing assessment of environmental performance;
- Locate taller buildings to the north of the site;
- Memorialise the history of the area;
- Allocate 20% of the residential component of the development to inclusionary housing; and
- Prevent uncontrolled access to the Raapenburg Wetland during construction and operations.

8 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project will entail so-called triple bottom line costs, i.e. social, environmental and economic costs. The triple bottom line concerns itself with environmental (taken to mean biophysical) sustainability, social equity and economic efficiency. The concept serves as a useful construct to frame the evaluation of environmental impacts of the project.

The challenge for the decision makers is to take a decision which is sustainable in the long term, and which will probably entail trade-offs between social (and cultural), environmental and economic costs and benefits. The trade-offs are documented in the BA Report, which assesses environmental, social and economic impacts and benefits and compares these to the No-Go alternative.

The site is strategically located close to the CBD, and offers one of the last major development opportunities this close to the City. The site has been the subject of revitalisation initiatives for over 25 years but none have been financially viable, leading to the persistent under–utilisation of the site.

The project achieves a number of the CoCT's key city making imperatives, including densification and mixed-use development. Nevertheless, the project is located in a sensitive cultural landscape and is located in the floodplain of the Liesbeek and Black Rivers, is zoned as *Private Open Space* and the development requires deviations from the current Table Bay District Plan (for which a planning application has been submitted).

In order to develop the site, large portions must be infilled to above the 1:100 floodline. The cost of the installation of services will be high. The developer has investigated reasonable (mixed-use) development alternatives identified by stakeholders and has assessed these to be not financially viable. The developer has further calculated that the floor area currently proposed is the minimum required to ensure financial feasibility, and as such, impacts associated with the change in character of the site and SAAO cannot be avoided completely through layout or operational alternatives. In other words, residual impacts on the character of the site and surrounds, and sense of place of the area are anticipated should the development proceed.

An experienced specialist team has not identified any fatal flaws associated with the Riverine Concept Alternative and has assessed that (as well as residual impacts) there will be a number of socio-economic benefits to local communities and government, and that the immediately adjacent ecological environment will be improved.

The EAPs believe, and specialist studies and the BA Report demonstrate that, through effective implementation of detailed design and the stipulated mitigation measures, the adverse impacts can be reduced to tolerable levels, and that benefits are significant. The Riverine Corridor Alternative is therefore positively assessed for development.

Ultimately, DEA&DP will need to consider whether to authorise the project, which brings significant economic and ecological benefits, but which will lead to irreversible (but acceptable) heritage and visual impacts.

9 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement is a key component of the BA process and is being undertaken to exceed the requirements of the EIA Regulations, 2014. Furthermore, two previous rounds of stakeholder engagement on a draft Scoping Report for the proposed development have informed the current development proposal, and the BA Report, as well as having generated a comprehensive stakeholder database.

Additional stakeholder engagement activities planned for the BA are summarised in Table 3.

Registered stakeholders, relevant local, provincial and national authorities, conservation bodies, local forums and surrounding landowners and occupants have been notified of the BA process and the release of the BA Report for pre-application stakeholder engagement.

The public comment period is currently underway and will end on 16 September 2019, following which the BA Report will be updated (if necessary), the application for EA submitted to DEA&DP, and the report re-released for another round of (post application) stakeholder engagement. Following this round of engagement, the BA Report will be finalised and submitted to DEA&DP, including all comments received, for their consideration.

Table 3: Stakeholder Engagement Proposed

Activity	Date
Release BA Report to the Public	By 15 July 2019
Comment period	15 July – 16 Sept. 2019
Submission of EA Application form	October 2019
Release BA Report to the Public	October 2019
Comment period	Oct. – Nov. 2019

HOW YOU CAN YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE EIA PROCESS

IAPs are invited to submit comments on the BA Report and/or send relevant details (see below) so that SRK can register you on the project database (if you are not registered already). IAPs should refer to the DEA&DP, DWS and HWC reference numbers, and must provide their comments together with their name, contact details (preferred method of notification, e.g. email), and an indication of any direct business, financial, personal or other interest which they have in the application, to the contact person below, by **16 September 2019.**

Only registered IAPs will be notified of future opportunities to provide comments.

This BA Report is not a final report and can be amended based on comments received from stakeholders. Stakeholders are therefore urged to participate:

REVIEW THE REPORT

Copies of the complete report are available for public review at the following locations:

- The Observatory Public Library;
- The River Club reception;
- SRK's Cape Town office; and
- SRK's website: www.srk.co.za – click on the 'Library' and then 'Public Documents' links.

ATTEND A MEETING

A Public Meeting will be held where the findings of the BA process will be presented, and additional concerns or issues can be raised:

Public Meeting:

- Venue: River Club
- Date: 15 August 2019
- Time: 18h00

Specialists will present at the meeting to respond to questions relating to the findings of their studies.

Relevant Organs of State have been automatically registered as stakeholders, and all stakeholders who have previously registered on the database are still registered. According to the EIA Regulations, 2014 all other **persons must request in writing to be placed on the register, submit written comments or attend meetings in order to be registered as stakeholders** and be included in future communication for the project.

REGISTER OR PROVIDE YOUR OPINION

Written comments and/or requests to be registered on the project database should be sent to:

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