

# PROPOSED MIXED USED DEVELOPMENT, COVE RIDGE ESTATE, BUFFALO CITY METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN CAPE

Background Information Document- DEDEAT Ref: (EC/7/A/LN1, LN2, LN3/M/14-11)

## INTRODUCTION

Indwe Environmental Consulting has been appointed as independent Environmental Assessment Practitioners to undertake a full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed Mixed Used Development on Portions 21, 22 and 23 of Farm 925, Cove Ridge, East London, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. The EIA will conform to the 2010 EIA Regulations, as published in Government Notice No. R. 543 – 546, as promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), as amended.

This document is intended to provide background information to stakeholders, authorities and other interested and affected parties and forms a key component of the public participation process being undertaken as part of the Scoping and EIA process.

## PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Mixed Use Development will take place on three adjoining unconsolidated land parcels namely Portions 21, 22 and 23 of Farm 925, Cove Ridge, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, East London. The land parcels are located approximately 1.2 kilometres west of the East London Airport and are bounded by the R346 (Mount Coke Road) to the north-east, the R72 to the south and small holdings to the west and north-west (Figure 1).

Portions 21, 22 and 23 of Farm 925 have a combined total land area of approximately 22 hectares and they are all currently zoned for Agricultural Use. These land parcels are owned by Creditsmith Capital Partners (Pty) Ltd. and they all fall within the BCMM Urban Edge. The current land use is that of small scale agricultural as well as private residence. The immediate surrounding land is predominantly being used for small scale agricultural, light industrial and informal settlements purposes.

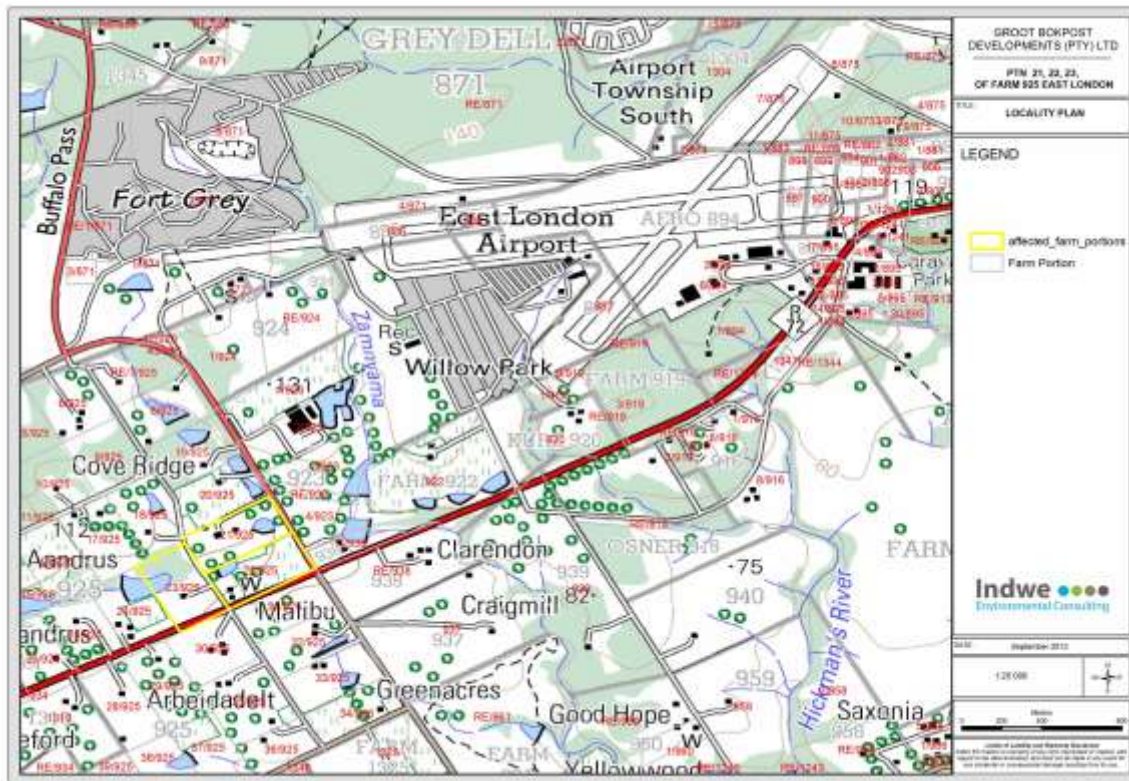


Figure 1: Locality of Portions 21, 22 and 23 of Farm 925, Cove Ridge, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, East London.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Mixed Use Development will take place on three adjoining unconsolidated land parcels (Figure 2). As such the intended land use will be described separately.

### 1. Portion 21 of Farm 925

Proposed development within this land parcel will comprise of the construction of 7 warehouses with a total development footprint of 8622m<sup>2</sup>

### 2. Portion 22 of Farm 925

Proposed development within this land parcel will comprise of:

- The construction of a service station with a total development footprint of 13137m<sup>2</sup>
- The construction of a truck stop with a total development footprint of 18490m<sup>2</sup>
- The construction of a commercial building premises with a total development footprint of 15834m<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Portion 23 of Farm 925

Proposed development within this land parcel will comprise of:

- The construction of business storage units with a total development footprint of 7159m<sup>2</sup> to 7739m<sup>2</sup>
- The construction of commercial building premises with a total development footprint of 4162 m<sup>2</sup> and 18265 m<sup>2</sup>
- Agricultural land with a total development footprint of 8409m<sup>2</sup>

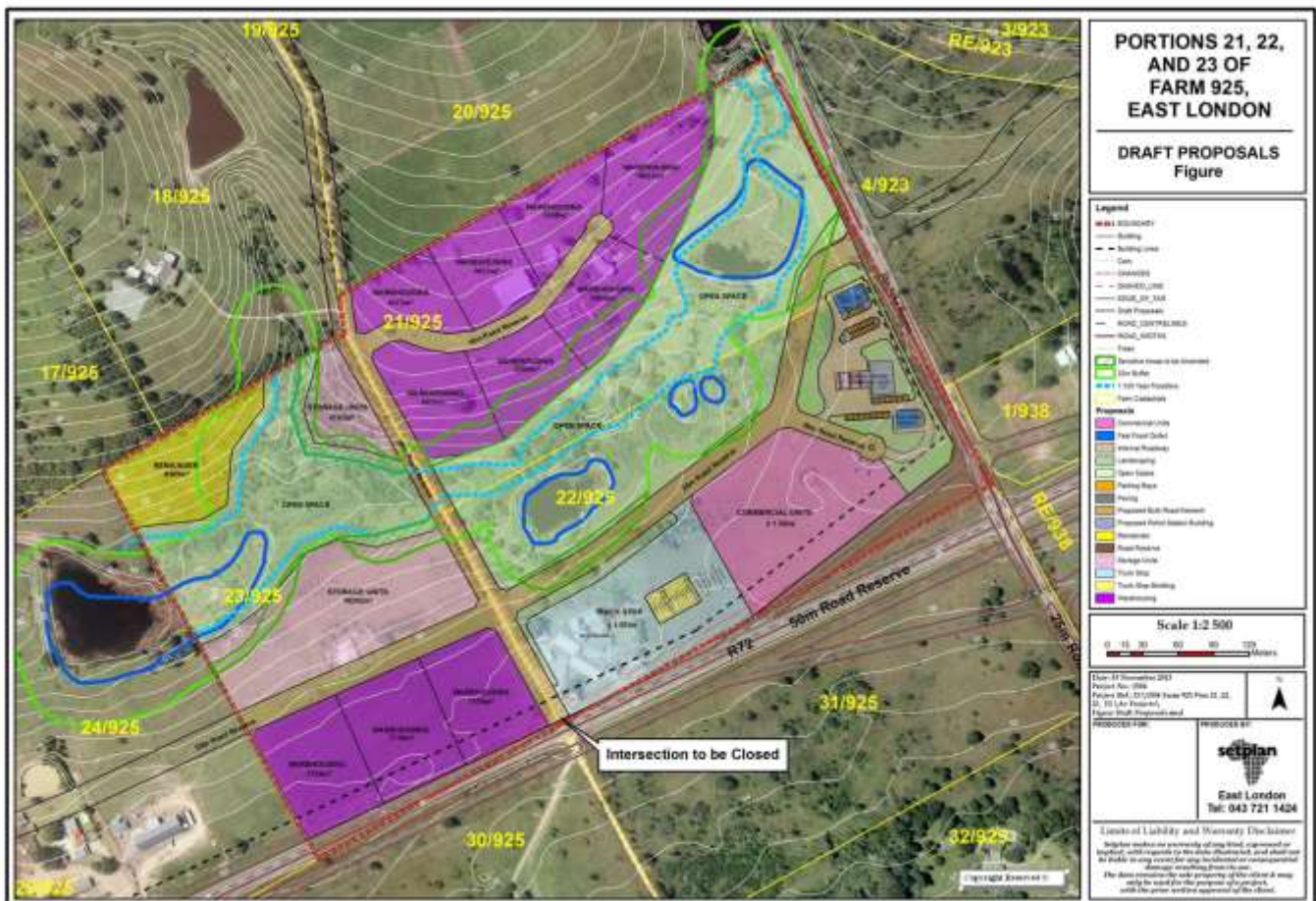


Figure 2: Proposed Development Plan.

In addition to the above, the project will involve the provision of bulk services such as water supply, electricity and stormwater. The locality of the proposed development falls outside the current reticulated areas of the BCMM; therefore there are currently no municipal services in the area.

- Water supply will most likely be serviced by the Fort Grey Reservoir Supply Zone.
- It is proposed that the developer constructs an interceptor sewer from the existing Zamnyama interceptor or alternatively construct a private operated pump station and rising main from the development along the R72 to connect with the existing Willowpark interceptor.
- Solid waste will be collected from the proposed development area on a weekly basis by BCMM for the disposal at the nearest waste disposal site.
- The study area has existing electrical infrastructure that may need to be upgraded to be able to service the development.
- A single access point off the Buffalo Pass Road on the adjacent Portion 21 is proposed to service the whole development area. From site observations sufficient spare capacity appears to exist along both the R72 and MR00504 to cater for long term future regarding anticipated traffic growth, including future trips relating to this development.

## NEEDS AND DESIRABILITY

The West Bank Local Spatial Development Framework (2004) indicates that the site is located close to the corner of two identified mobility routes, being the R72 coastal route between East London and Port Alfred, and the Mount Coke Road/ Buffalo Pass Road between East London and King William's Town. Mobility routes are defined as roads with limited access that principally carry traffic between major nodes, and are focussed on the transportation of people, goods and services between nodes. The location of the site provides advantages for its development as far as accessibility and visibility are concerned. The development of the site for mixed uses as proposed in the WBLSDF will benefit from the ideal location of the site.

The area around the intersection between the R72 and Mount Coke Road/ Buffalo Pass Road has been identified as a potential second order node, which is defined as an area where a mixed use development can be accommodated, including high intensity activities involving retail, office, industrial and residential land uses. Nodes are where most interaction between people and organisations takes place, enabling the most efficient transactions and exchange of goods and services. They are usually located at transport interchanges to provide maximum access and act as catalysts for new growth and development.

A change in the use of the property from agricultural to mixed use will ensure investment and improvement to the property, which will be an advantage to the area and ensure that development takes place in a manner proposed by the municipality. The proposed mixed use development supports the development principles of spatial sustainability and spatial efficiency by optimising the use of land and resources, limiting urban sprawl and protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

Regarding the truck stop in particular, BCMM has prepared a Freight Transport Plan for the Metro which indicates that no filling stations with truck stop facilities and amenities are located on the main routes into Buffalo City on the outskirts of town exist. Certain corridors such as the R72, in the Greenfields area, are plagued with problems as freight vehicles park alongside the road and operators cross busy traffic lanes to access food outlets, despite road traffic signage prohibiting this and on-going law enforcement. There is thus an opportunity to minimise such illegal activity by the provision of such facilities along routes on the outskirts of Buffalo City.

The site specifically is located within the area identified as the West Bank Zone. The proposals for this zone indicate that the site is within an area which has been identified for mixed use development, primarily to support the industrial land uses to the east, within the Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) and the high density residential areas proposed around the airport and the Nordev restitution project. The mixed uses specified include shops, offices and service industries, but would not include conflicting uses like panel beating shops/ enterprises, tyre fitment centres, etc.

It is clear that the proposed use of the site as envisaged is in line with the proposals contained in the West Bank Local Spatial Development Framework.



## EIA REQUIREMENTS

The National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) Section 24(5) stipulates that "listed activities" require environmental authorization by way of an Environmental Impact Assessment. Activity Number 15 of Listing Notice No. 2 is triggered by the development and requires a full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment.

The following listed activities are triggered in **Listing Notice No. 1** and will be applied for under one application

Listing Notice Number	Activity No.	Development Activity
544, 18 June 2010	9(i)	The construction of facilities or infrastructure exceeding 1000 metres in length for the bulk transportation of water, sewage or storm water - (i) with an internal diameter of 0,36 metres or more
544, 18 June 2010	11 (v), (xi)	The construction of bulk storm water outlet structures covering 50 square metres or more where such construction is within or 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge where such construction will occur behind the development setback line.
544, 18 June 2010	13	The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the storage and handling, of a dangerous good, where such storage occurs in containers with a combined capacity of 80 but not exceeding 500 cubic metres.
544, 18 June 2010	22	The construction of a road, outside urban areas, (i) With a road reserve wider than 13.5 metres or, (ii) Where no road reserve exists where the road exists where the road is wider than 8 metres.
544, 18 June 2010	37	The expansion of facilities or infrastructure for the bulk transportation of water, sewage or stormwater where a) The facility or infrastructure is expanded by more than 1000 m in length; or b) Where the throughput capacity of the facility or infrastructure will be increased by 10% or more.
544, 18 June 2010	39(iii)	The expansion of bridges, within a watercourse or within 32 m of a watercourse, measured from the edge of a watercourse, where such expansion will result in an increased development footprint but excluding where such expansion will occur behind the development setback line.

The following listed activity is triggered in **Listing Notice No. 2** and will be applied for under one application

Listing Notice Number	Activity No.	Development Activity
545, 18 June 2010	15	Physical alteration of undeveloped vacant or derelict land or residential, retail, commercial, recreational, industrial or institutional use where the total area to be transformed is 20 hectares or more.

The following listed activity is triggered in **Listing Notice No. 3** and will be applied for under one application

Listing Notice Number	Activity No.	Development Activity
546, 18 June 2010	13(iii)	The clearance of an area of 1 hectare or more of vegetation where 75% or more of the vegetation cover constitutes indigenous vegetation, except where such removal of vegetation is required for 1) The undertaking of a process or activity included in list of waste management activities published in terms of the section 19 of the National Environmental Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008), in which case activity falling below the thresholds mentioned in Listing Notice 1 in terms of GN No 544 of 2012. 2) The undertaking of a linear activity falling below the threshold mentioned in

Listing Notice Number	Activity No.	Development Activity
		the listing Notice 1 in terms of GN no. 544 of 2010. (dd) In the Eastern Cape, in urban areas on the watercourse side of the development setback line or within a 100 m of a water course where no such setback line has been determined.

### SCOPING AND EIA PROCESS

The full Scoping and EIA process will be followed and will involve the following project phases:

- 1. Application Phase:** An application for authorisation has been submitted to the relevant authority, the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), East London Office. This application has subsequently been accepted with the reference No: **(EC/7/A/LN1, LN2, LN3/M/14-11)**.
- 2. Scoping Phase:** Once the application has been accepted, the project will enter the Scoping Phase and will culminate in the production of a Scoping Report. This phase will include a Public Participation Process (PPP). The Scoping Phase aims to achieve the following:
  - To record the issues, concerns and objections of the public
  - To identify key issues and potential impacts associated with the project
  - To identify different alternatives associated with the project
- 3. EIA Phase:** Once the Scoping Report is approved, the project will proceed into the detailed EIA Phase. This will involve a detailed impact assessment with specialist input and the production of an EIA Report. An Environmental Management Programme (EMP) will be prepared as a component of the EIA report and will focus on mitigating the environmental impacts identified in the process.

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The details of the public participation process are outlined in Regulation 54 of the EIA Regulations, as published in Government Notice No. R 543.

Crucial to the EIA process is input from Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs). Hence the public are encouraged to register as I&APs for this project and to submit their comments in writing to the environmental practitioners. Registered I&APs will be kept informed of project progress throughout the EIA process.

The public will also be given the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Scoping Report and the Draft Environmental Impact Report. All comments raised by I&APs will be incorporated into the final reports and submitted to the environmental authority (DEDEAT) to enable them to make an informed decision with regard to the development proposal.

Once an Environmental Authorisation is received, it will be distributed to registered I&APs who may appeal to the Minister or MEC of Environmental Affairs in opposition to the decision.

### PLANNING PROCESS

An application for the establishment of a land development area on Portions 21, 22 and 23 of Farm 925 Cove Ridge, East London in terms of the Land Use Planning Ordinance has been made by Setplan, East London and submitted to Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

### KEY ISSUES AND TYPICAL IMPACTS

Key issues and typical environmental impacts associated with the project identified to date include:

- The capacity of BCMM to accept bulk services (i.e. sewage treatment and potable water supply) to the proposed project
- Pedestrian safety - An increase in visitors and traffic accessing the site could increase pedestrian safety risks.
- Increased traffic accessing the site
- Increased ambient noise levels
- Increased visual impacts
- Potential ground water contamination from fuel station
- Increased stormwater due to surface hardening
- Social issues associated with changing land use:
  - Change in property value of surrounding land owners
  - Crime rates
- Loss of current landuse capability (change from agricultural zone to urban area)
- Potential employment opportunities for construction and operation phases
- Economic investment and social upliftment through the:
  - Provision of commercial services
  - Provision of Municipal services
- Improved public transport infrastructure
- The clearing of indigenous vegetation and associated biodiversity impacts

#### **DETAILS OF THE EAP CONDUCTING THE EIA**

Indwe Environmental Consulting CC is a registered environmental consultancy that specialises in all facets of environmental management. Our focus is on project based environmental studies. Broadly the services offered are Basic Assessments, Full Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental studies (State of the Environment Reporting, Strategic Environmental Assessments, Environmental Management Frameworks) and integrated waste management planning.

Brendon Steytler is the principal member of Indwe Environmental Consulting. Brendon is a professionally registered Environmental Scientist (Pr.Sci. Nat. No. 400304/06) and holds a Masters Degree in Environment and Development. Brendon has been involved in many diverse EIA's and other environmental studies within the Eastern Cape for the last 11 years.

#### **YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED**

Should you wish to express your views regarding this proposed development, please feel free to register as an I&AP by sending us your written comments. Please submit your name, contact information and written comments to the contact person below. A written comments form is supplied at the back end of this notice for your convenience.

#### **Contact**

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