

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT
as part of the
BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS
for the
**PROPOSED WILLOWFOUNTAIN ROAD UPGRADE,
EDENDALE, MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY (WARD 14)**

1. Introduction

The Msunduzi Municipality has proposed the upgrade of the Willowfountain Road, in Edendale, Pietermaritzburg. The road upgrade aims to allow local residents to have improved, formalised access to their homes, schools, shops and the extended road network. The project is located in Ward 14 of the Msunduzi Local Municipality.

Before construction of the road may commence, an environmental authorisation is required from the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (DAEA), in compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2010. In order to obtain this authorisation a Basic Assessment is currently being undertaken by Enviroedge cc.

2. The Project

The project involves the construction of a 1.6km, 6m wide black top all-weather road complete with drainage and watercourse crossings and storm water drains and a pedestrian walkway. The road currently consists of a gravel access road and temporary surfaces with informal drainage crossings and storm water pipes. The current road conditions are susceptible to erosion which makes access problematic for the local residents of Willowfountain. The road upgrade has been designed to align with the existing roads.

The road start and end points can be found at:

Start:	29°42'39.567"S, 30°19'1.418"E
End:	29°42'44.818"S, 30°18'34.846"E

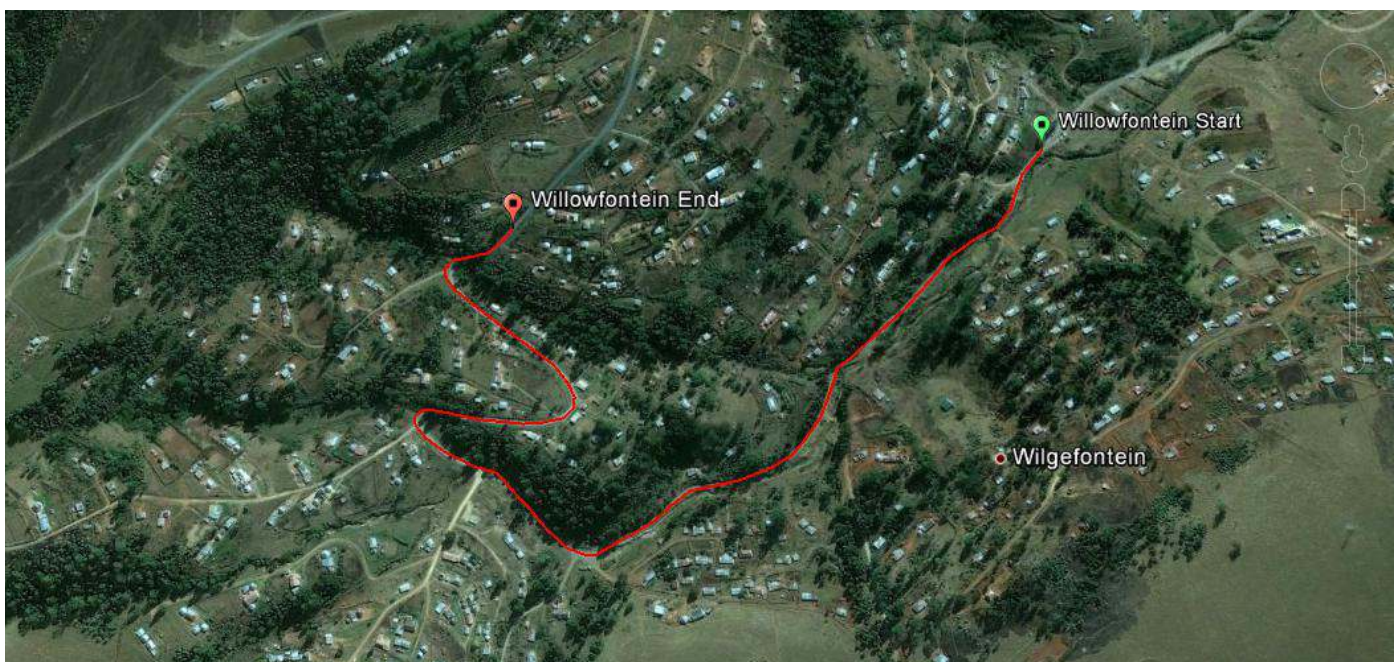


Figure 1. Image showing study area of proposed road upgrade. (Source, Google Earth)

3. Environmental and Social Description

Climate: Rainfall in the study area occurs predominantly during the spring and summer months, with some scattered rainfall events occurring during the winter months. There is heavy and frequent mist that occurs in this region, providing significant amounts of additional moisture. Thunderstorms are common in summer and autumn, and frosts are generally moderate, but occasional severe frost may occur. Short term drought spells together with hail and hot north-westerly berg wind conditions occur particularly in spring and early summer and are characteristic of the area. The annual precipitation ranges from 730mm -1280mm with an average annual temperature of 15.8°C.

Topography and Drainage: The study area is surrounded by high points, to the north-west 1128m and 1159m, to the south-west 1333m, to the south-east 1056.4m and to the north-east 957m. The Sinathing River flows to the north-west of the site, and numerous tributaries of the Mlazi to the south, flowing eastward. The study area is located on the upper edges of a valley head which runs in a generally north-easterly direction, and the landscape is characterised by a number of smaller tributaries and drainage lines of the Wilgerfontein River situated to the north-east of the site between iMbal and Slangspruit. The proposed road upgrade includes the upgrade of four existing culverts and the re-alignment and upgrading of two hairpin bends. Please see topographical map attached.

Geology and Soils: Soils are apedal and plinthic derived mostly from Ecca Group (Karoo Supergroup) shale and minor sandstone and less importantly from Jurassic dolerite dykes and sills.

Vegetation: The local vegetation is defined as Midlands Mistbelt Grassland (Gs9), (Mucina and Rutherford, 2006). The dominant natural feature being the hilly and rolling landscape, dominated by forb-rich, tall, sour Themeda triandra grasslands, transformed by the invasion of native Ngongoni grass *Aristida junciformis*. The ecological sensitivity of the local vegetation is likely to be low due to existing habitation. The EKZNW Terrestrial Systematic Conservation Plan, TSCP (2010) indicates a Biodiversity Priority Area 3 located to the west of the study area, and another to the south-east of the study area, with species listed including: *Euonyma lymneaeformis*, *Senecio exuberans*, *Dierama reynoldsii* – Wand Flower, *Bradypodion bourquini* - Dwarf chamaeleon and various *Doratogonus sp.*

Culture and Heritage: The presence of features of cultural or historical importance is currently unknown.

National and District Roads: The proposed road upgrade links into the existing Willowfountain Road and it is not likely to impact any provincial or national road.

Utilities: Electricity and telephone lines and water pipelines were noted along the road alignment edges, all relevant government departments or parastatals will be consulted as part of the Public Participation Process.

4. Public Consultation

Members of the public have the right to be consulted during the Public Participation Process. If you would like to be part of this process please register with the environmental consultant using the contacts below.

Consultants: Enviroedge cc.

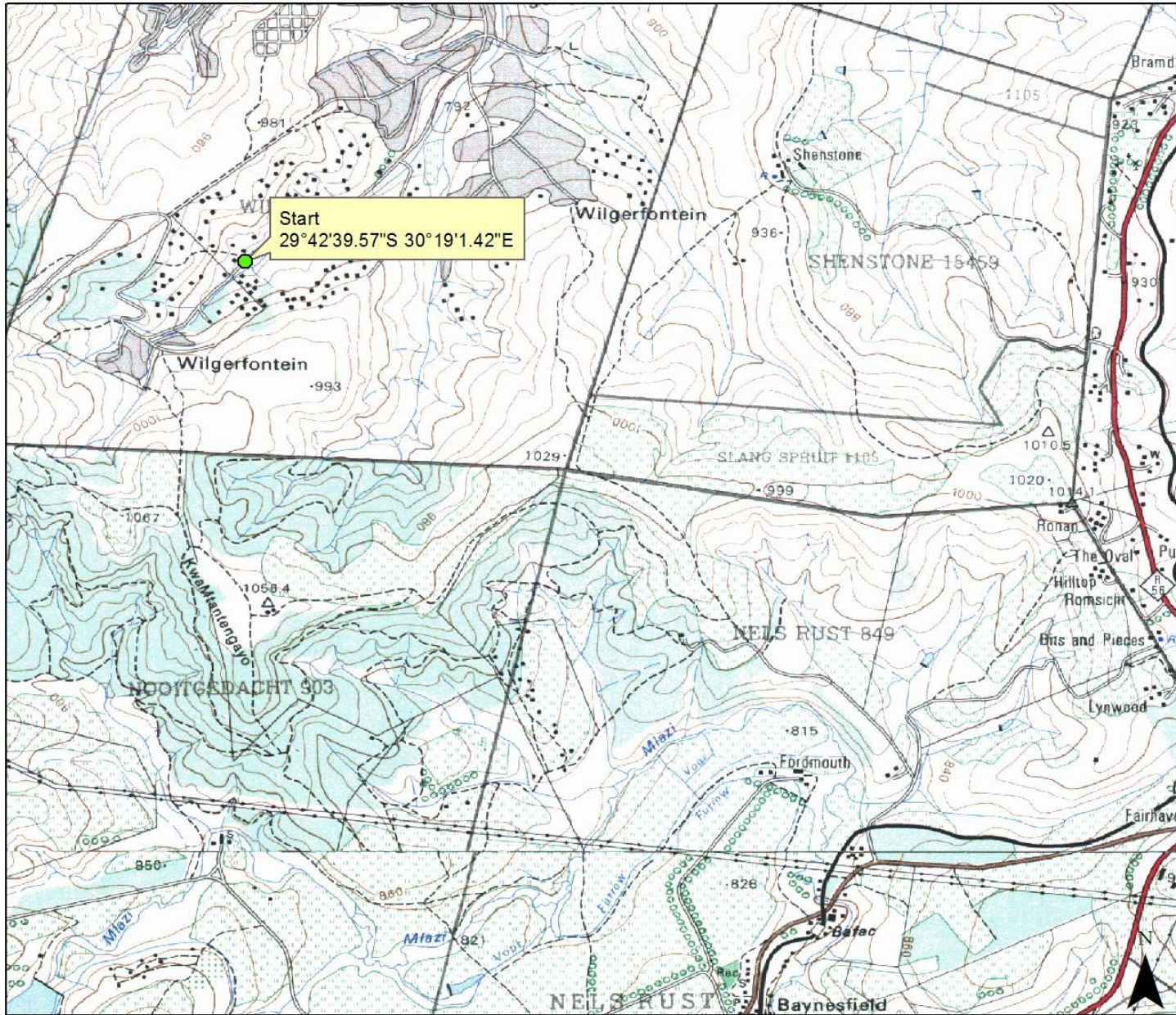
Contact: Karin Samouilhan

PO BOX 1009, Kloof, 3640

Tel: 031 764 2569; Fax: 031 764 2569

E-mail: info@enviroedge.co.za





Project:
Willowfontain Road

Title:
Locality Plan

Scale: 1:40 000
 0 500 1 000 2 000
 Meters

Date:
March 2013

Rev: 01



PO BOX 1009, Kloof, 3640
 Tel: (031) 764 2569
 Fax: (086) 654 6598
 info@enviroedge.co.za

Figure 2. Locality Plan