

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
FOR THE PROPOSED ESIKHALENI MALL: ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS
UPGRADE OF MTHOMBOTHU / MDLEBE MTSHONA INTERSECTION KWAZULU-NATAL.**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE
4 AUGUST 2016**

1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The aim of this document is to:

- Provide background information to parties interested in and/or affected by the proposed development;
- Provide information of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process to be followed for the proposed upgrade of Mthombothi / Mdlebe Mtshona Intersection Kwazulu-Natal; and
- Indicate how you, as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), can become involved in the EIA and WULA processes.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of uMhlathuze is planning to implement road safety improvements in Esikhaleni. The improvements will include the widening of the existing Mthombothi/Mdlebe Mtshona intersection in order to increase the capacity, as well as the rehabilitation of the existing pavement structure.

3. PROJECT LOCATION

The site is located in eSikhaleni, approximately 15km south of Richards Bay. The project proposes the upgrade and widening of the existing Mthombothi/Mdlebe Mtshona intersection (Refer to Appendix 1, Locality Map). The study area occurs within quarter degree grid cell 2831DD with the geographical coordinates of the site at 28°52'15.64"S and 31°54'01,24"E.

4. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The City of uMhlathuze proposes the upgrade and widening of the existing Mthombothi/Mdlebe Mtshona intersection in order to increase the capacity. This includes the rehabilitation of the existing pavement structures.

The secondary components of work include upgrading the storm water drainage system which includes the widening of the existing triple cell culvert. The culvert will be lengthened to accommodate the additional lanes. The cross-sectional size of the culvert will however remain the same.

Additional work includes the relocation of bulk services, installation of lay-byes, sidewalks and bus shelters, the completion and modification to the partially constructed Information Centre building, paving and general improvements to Monument Park and surrounds, installation of new street lighting and general landscaping.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) AND WATER USE LICENSE APPLICATION (WULA) PROCESSES - LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of the EIA Regulations published in Government Notice No. R. 982 of 4 December 2014 under Section 24(5), and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, the intent to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment Process (in terms of Listing Notice 1 – GN R983) for the listed activity 19 of GNR 983 and a Water Use Authorisation, to be submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in terms of Section 21 of the National Water Act (NWA), (Act 36 of 1998).

GN R983 - NEMA Environmental Impact Assessments Listing Notice 1 of 2014:

Activity 19: *The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 5 m³ into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock from (i) a watercourse;*

National Water Act (NWA), (Act 36 of 1998) for the listed activities in Section 21.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Process and Water Use License Application (WULA) consist of the following two very closely interlinked processes:

- A technical process, which entails the identification and management of possible environmental issues/concerns; and
- A public participation process, which requires public consultation in order to assist in the identification of possible environmental and/or social issues and/or concerns.

6. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

It is anticipated that the following environmental aspects will be significant and will hence be addressed by the Project Team during the assessment process:

- Impacts on water resources and wetlands; and
- Impacts on the socio-economic dynamics of the area.

Management guidelines will be developed for the abovementioned issues and incorporated in an Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

You are welcome to comment on the above list and provide additional anticipated issues and possible impacts which should be addressed.

7. SPECIALISTS

The Project Team has identified potentially significant issues and will further assess these impacts in terms of their significance in accordance with the guidelines for EIA published by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). The following specialist study will be conducted:

- Wetland delineation and Functionality Assessment;

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) or other stakeholders may require additional specialists' studies if necessary.

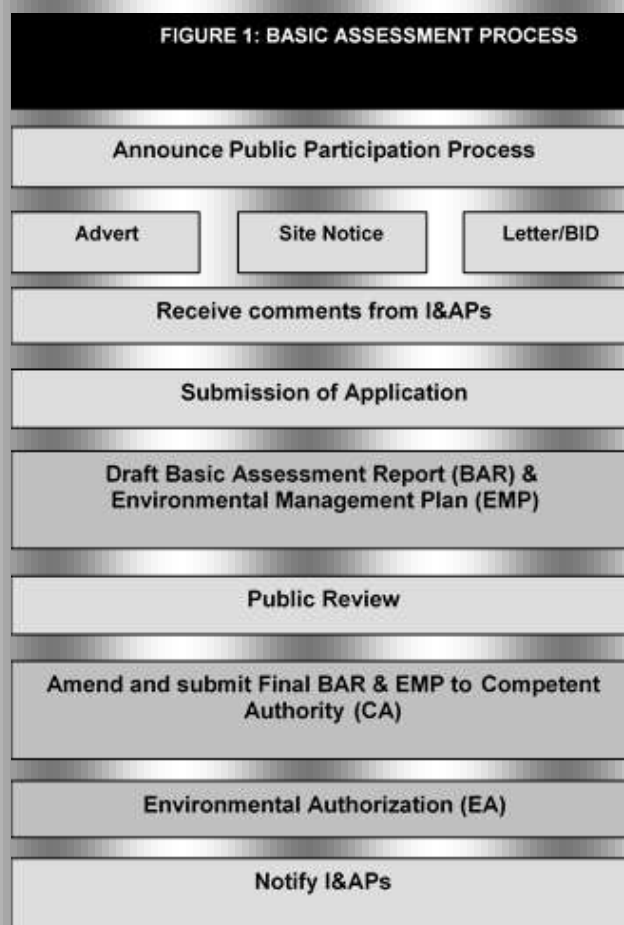
8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS (PPP)

Public Participation (PP) is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and forms an integral part of the EIA. The PPP provides

people who may be affected by the proposed development, with an opportunity to provide comments and to raise issues of concern, or to make suggestions that may result in enhanced benefits for the project.

Comments and issues raised during the public participation process will be captured, evaluated and included in a Comments and Response Report, which will be incorporated into the Basic Assessment Report (BAR). The draft BAR, EMP and WULA will be made available for public review prior to submission to the relevant environmental authority.

The process to be followed is depicted in Figure 1.



9. APPROVING AUTHORITY

DEDTEA is the relevant authority which will review the BAR while the DWS will review the WULA. These authorities have to reach a decision as to whether, and under what conditions, the project may proceed, based on environmental considerations. An Environmental

Authorisation will be issued based on the information provided in the BAR and a Water Use License will be issued based on the information in the WULA.

The process to be followed for the Basic Assessment (BA) is depicted in Figure 1 as per the amended 2014 NEMA regulations.

10. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Exigent Engineering Consultants has been appointed by the City of uMhlathuze to manage and facilitate the environmental and public participation processes required for the project.

We would like to encourage you to participate in this EIA and WULA processes. Should you wish to get involved, please complete the enclosed registration sheet and return it on or before **4 September 2016 for NEMA comments and 4 October 2016 for NWA comments.**, to:

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APPENDIX 1. Locality Map

