

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT
DEVELOPMENT OF LAKESIDE INDUSTRIAL AND ASSOCIATED
SERVICES ON AGRICULTURAL LAND RESULTING IN
DEVELOPMENT WITHIN 32M OF WATERCOURSES AND THE
INFILLING / EXCAVATION OF MATERIAL WITHIN
WATERCOURSES.
KWADUKUZA MUNICIPALITY

PROJECT BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

uShukela Milling (Pty) Ltd are the landowners of Farm Blythdale No. 17461 located within the KwaDukuza Local Municipality, iLembe District (outlined in yellow in Figure 1 below). Farm Blythdale 17461 is 1 979.6 hectares in extent and spans from KwaDukuza Town to the coastline. The property is an active sugarcane farm and falls within the KwaDukuza Town Planning Scheme. The property is zoned Agriculture 1. The property has been excluded from the provisions of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, Act No. 70 of 1970 (Act 70/70 consent). Consent was granted by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on the 02nd March 2018.

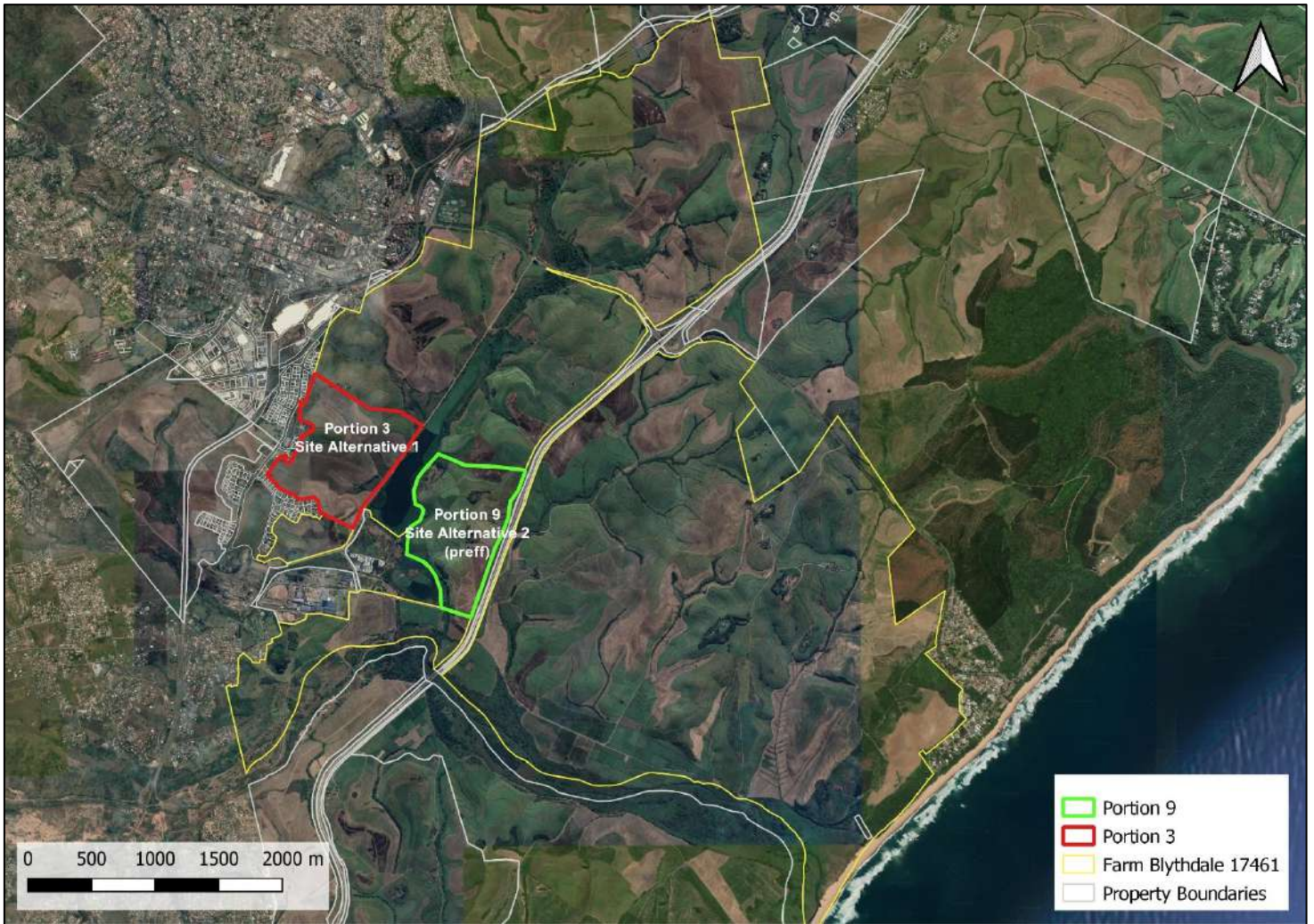
The landowner is in the process of subdividing the farm. The western portion of the farm, close to Stanger town has been identified as having high industrial value. This is considering the surrounding land uses and proximity to the N2 highway. Potential investors require the land to be zoned for industrial use prior to any further negotiations taking place. The intention is to rezone the portion of land where the industrial development is proposed to “*General Industry*”. Two sites have been considered and will be assessed in the EIA; proposed Portion 3 of Farm Blythdale 17461 (Site Alternative 1, red in Figure 1) and proposed Portion 9 of Farm Blythdale 17461 (Site Alternative 2; green in Figure 1). Preliminary investigations have indicated that Site 2 is the preferred site alternative.

The layout of the industrial platforms has not yet been determined and therefore a single, 40-hectare platform will be assessed in the EIA. At this early stage of the development, it is unknown what structures will be constructed on the platform. The applicant is aware that further environmental authorisations may be required depending on the specific type of industry operating on the site.

On behalf of the landowner, Royal Shaka Property Group (Pty) Ltd will be applying for the Environmental Authorisation, which is required for the potential infilling of wetland areas associated with the development of the industrial platform, the excavation / infilling of watercourses at the new access road, water pipeline and sewer pipeline crossings and for the development of road and pipe infrastructure within 32m of watercourses. Environmental Authorisation is also required for industrial developments on land that was used for agriculture on or after 01 April 1998.

This Background Information Document (BID) has been prepared to provide information on the process which will be followed to assess the environmental impact of the change in land use and confirm the specialist studies required.

Figure 1: Farm Blythdale 17461 outlined in yellow with the two site alternatives outlined in red and white.



SITE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Vegetation

The property falls within the KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Belt (CB 3) ecosystem type which is classified as *vulnerable* by the South African National Biodiversity Institute. The vegetation to be cleared to accommodate proposed industrial platforms is 100% transformed and is comprised of sugarcane.

- Watercourses

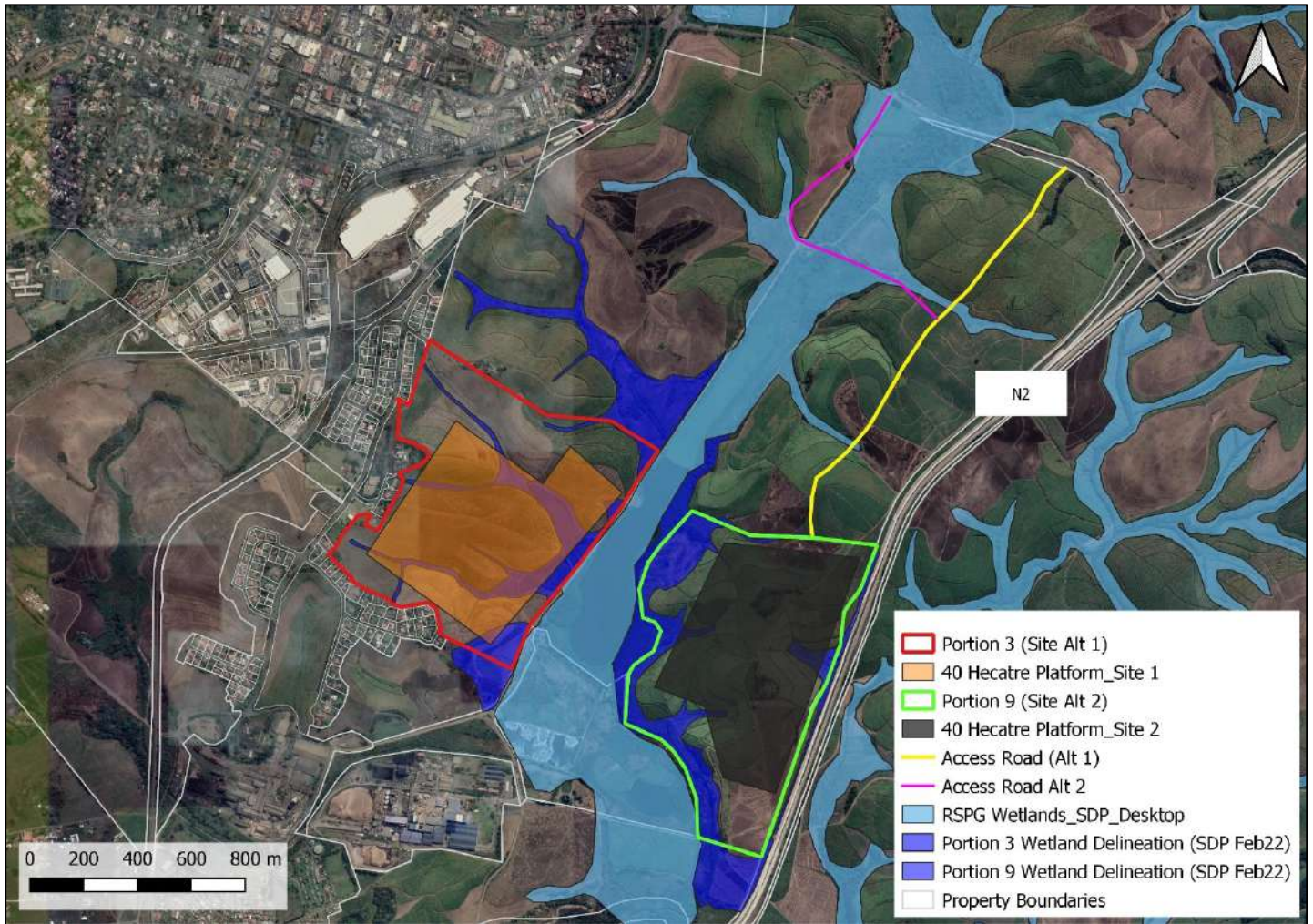
The study area is located within the U40J quaternary catchment. SDP Ecological and Environmental Services have provided a preliminary wetland delineation for the two site alternatives (Figure 2).

- Heritage

The site is undeveloped and therefore there are no known heritage or cultural features associated with the area. Any development or activity which will change the characteristics of a site exceeding 5 000m² in extent requires a Heritage Impact Assessment and therefore the specialist will confirm the status of the site and surrounds. The study area falls within a “*moderate*” palaeontological sensitive area. A Desktop Palaeontological Impact Assessment will be required to confirm the likelihood of uncovering fossils during construction and the submission of a Protocol for Fossil Finds.

There are two structures / homesteads on proposed Portion 9 of Farm Blythdale 17461. The age of the structures will be determined by a Built Heritage specialist and the impact of these structures being demolished.

Figure 2: Map Showing the Desktop Wetland Delineation for the Study Area.



IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Since the configuration of the platforms (i.e. one large platforms vs multiple smaller platforms) and layout of infrastructure on those platforms is not yet known, the overall change in land use will be assessed according to the allowances permitted in the town planning scheme for “*General Industry*”. This zoning permits “*manufacturing uses, a combination of light manufacturing uses found in other zones and more intensive manufacturing uses that are compatible with sensitive land uses such as those found in residential and environmental services zones. Warehousing of materials considered non-noxious or non-hazardous are permitted in buildings in this zone*”. The applicant has indicated that a single, 40-hectare platform should be assessed as this is the maximum requirement requested by an interested investor.

The key aspects which will form the focus of the assessment are:

- To assess the change in land use from agricultural to industrial. This includes the loss of open space, faunal movement corridors, stormwater management with the increase in hard surfaces etc.
- To review the availability of services in the area (water, sewage and road network) to ensure the development is feasible and sustainable; and
- To provide measures in the EMPr to be adhered to during construction so that earthworks do not result in any disturbance to the downstream watercourses (physical and functionality).

The following specialist studies have been identified in the Screening Report:

Study	Specialist	Objective
Agricultural Impact Assessment	N/A	The property has been excluded from the provisions of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, Act No. 70 of 1970 (Act 70/70 consent). Consent was granted by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on the 02 nd March 2018.
Landscape / Visual Impact Assessment	TBC	The engineer will be able to show renderings of the various platform layouts, if requested by the public.
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment	Jean Beater	A Phase 1 Heritage Impact Assessment will be carried out to confirm if the site has any heritage or cultural value.
Palaeontology Impact Assessment	Marion Bamford	The property falls within a “moderately” sensitive palaeontological area. A desktop assessment is therefore required by AMAFA.
Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment	SDP	The study area is completely transformed by sugarcane. There is no indigenous vegetation that will be cleared. SDP to review the site and confirm this (statement on terrestrial biodiversity).
Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment	SDP	A wetland delineation has been provided by SDP. The impact of the proposed 40 ha platform and associated service infrastructure will be assessed by SDP and recommendations provided. The impact assessment must also include the development of services associated with the site (i.e. access road crossing watercourses, pipelines etc.).
Hydrology Assessment	N/A	A stormwater management plan will be compiled by the engineer to ensure that all stormwater is attenuated on site before being discharge into the nearby valley lines. The development of industrial platforms will therefore not change the hydrological nature of the watercourses and a full hydrological assessment is not required.
Socio-Economic Assessment	N/A	The proposed project will have a positive socio-economic impact. A socio-economic impact assessment will not be provided unless specifically requested by EDTEA.
Plant Species Assessment	SDP	As above, SDP to review the site and confirm if any indigenous species will be cleared however the entire site is currently under sugarcane farming.
Animal Species Assessment	SDP	SDP to include comment on faunal species that may utilise the site and assess the impact of the change in land use on these species.
Avifaunal Impact Assessment	David Allen	The SAPPI bird hide has been identified near proposed Portion 9 of Farm Blythdale 17461. An avifaunal specialist will therefore be commissioned to comment on the change in land use and provide any mitigation measures to ensure the bird hide is not negatively impacted.
Engineering Services Report	SMA	SMA Group will prepare the Engineering Services Report (ESR) to ensure there is sufficient bulk water and sewer services available in the area. The water and sewer pipeline routes will be provided in the ESR.
Traffic Impact Statement	NSA	A traffic engineer will be appointed to provide comment on the proposed access routes and linkages onto the N2 highway.