

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT
As part of the
BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS
For the
**PROPOSED CLYDESDALE CEMETERY WITHIN THE UMZIMKHULU
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

1. Introduction

The Umzimkhulu Local Municipality has identified the need to expand an existing cemetery site in the town of Clydesdale. Before the expansion of the cemetery can commence, environmental authorisation from the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs, in compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations of 2010, is required. In order to obtain this authorisation a Basic Assessment is currently being undertaken by Enviroedge on behalf of the Umzimkhulu Local Municipality.

2. The Project

Clydesdale currently has an existing cemetery site which has reached its burial capacity. The proposed cemetery site would entail the expansion of the existing site to the south and east by approximately 2 hectares (2ha). The site is located approximately 12km south west of the Umzimkhulu central business district, in ward 17 of the Umzimkhulu Municipality. The proposed site is located adjacent to the R56 road, to the south of Clydesdale. Taking both current and future calculated population statistics, the proposed cemetery establishment has been planned to provide burial sites which will cater to the Clydesdale and nearby communities for the next twenty (20) years. The project is aimed to provide a burial location in close proximity for the local community, so as to prevent 'back yard burials' and also to help reduce the need to travel to district cemetery sites. The cemetery establishment aims to cater for the cultural needs within the municipal area. The site can be found at 30°18'7.17"S 29°56'32.67"E.

3. The Biophysical Environment

Rivers and topography: The cemetery site is located adjacent to the R56 road, with the primary Umzimkhulu River located 3.1 km to the north east. Two perennial tributaries flow in a north easterly direction towards the Umzimkhulu River. These tributaries are approximately 110m to the east and 170m to the west of the proposed site. The site is located on a north east facing slope with gentle gradients. The altitude across the site varies from 790 *masl* to 810 *masl*.

Geology and Soils: Mucina and Rutherford (2006) describe the geology of the region as dominated by mudstones and sandstones of the Tarkastad Subgroup and the Molteno Formation (Karoo Supergroup) as well as intrusive dolerites of Jurassic age. The dominant soils on the sedimentary parent material are well drained, with a depth of more than 800mm and clay content from 15-55%, representing soil forms such as Balmoral, Shortlands and Vimy.

Vegetation: The study area falls within the Grassland biome and Mucina and Rutherford (2006) classify the vegetation group as Drakensburg Foothill Moist Grassland (Gs 10). Typical characteristics of this classification type are moderately rolling and mountainous hills, incised by river gorges of drier vegetation types and by forest, and covered in forb-rich grassland dominated by short bunch grasses including *Themeda triandra* and *Tristachya leucothrix*. The study area consists of previously disturbed agricultural land. Some *Aloe sp* and *Solanum sp* were noted together with the alien invasives *Syringa* and *Eucalyptus* trees.

Conservation Value: The Drakensburg Foothill Moist Grassland can be defined as least threatened with a target conservation value of 23% of this vegetation type.

Climate: The study area receives summer rainfall with drier winters. The mean annual precipitation is 860mm and an average annual temperature of 14.66°C.

Roads: The proposed cemetery site expansion is located adjacent to the R56 road and at the D2423 turnoff.

4. Public Participation Process (PPP)

Members of the public have the opportunity to be consulted during the Public Participation Process. If you would like to be part of this process please register with Steven Whitaker using the contact details below.

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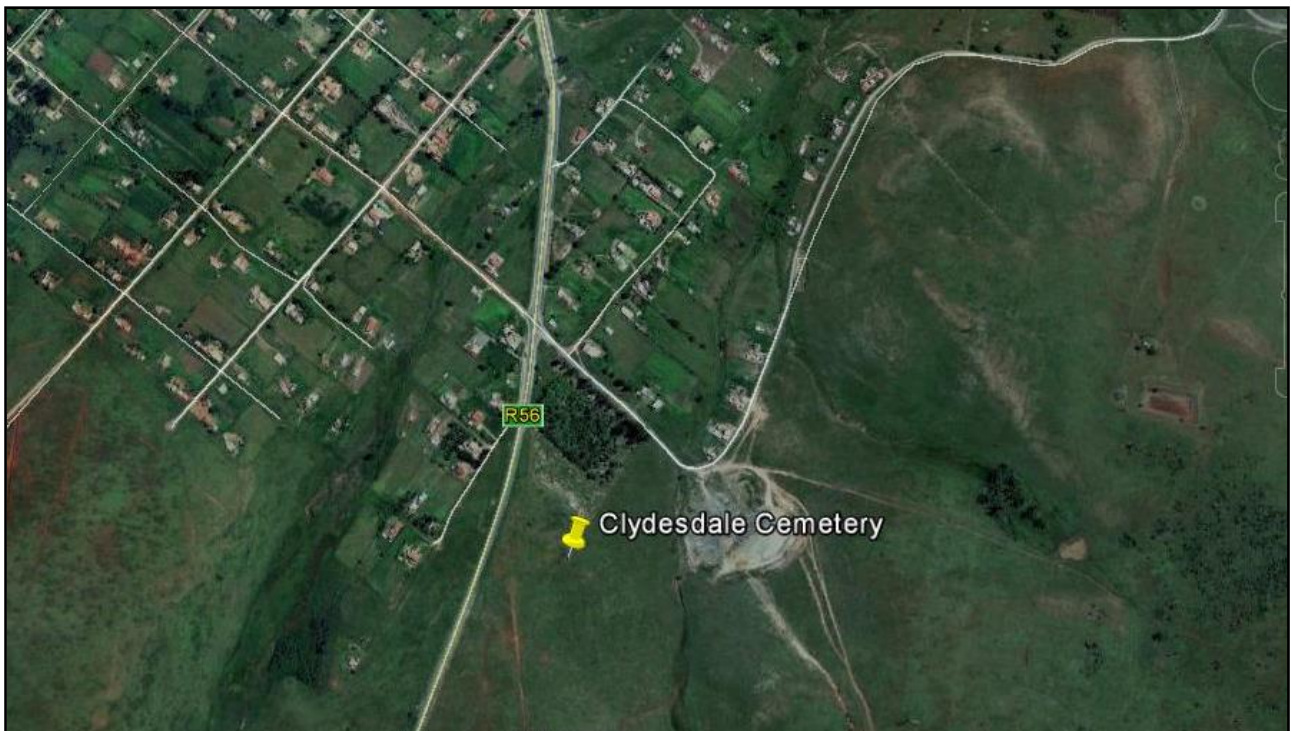


Figure 1. Google Earth Image showing location of the proposed Cemetery site expansion

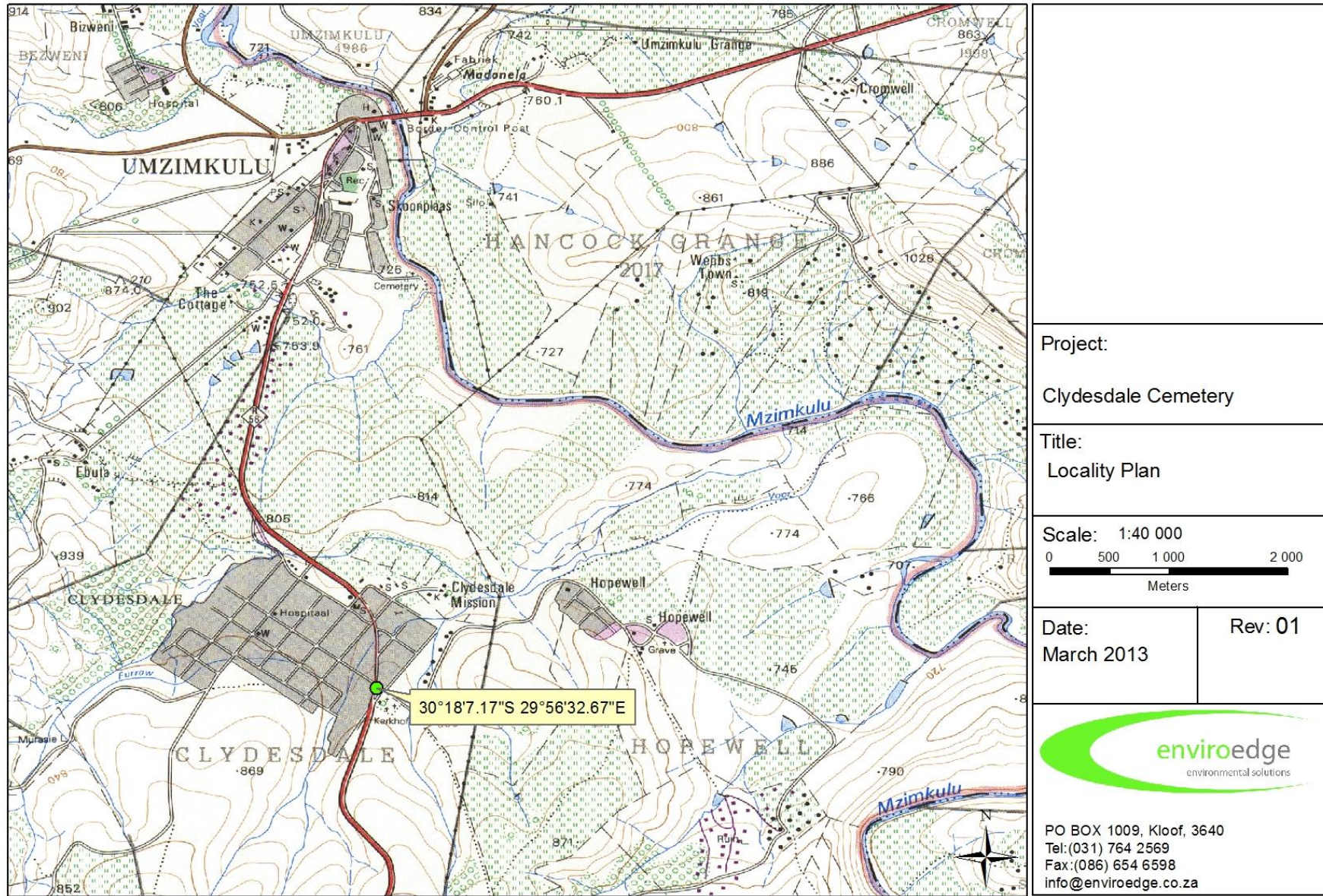


Figure 2. Topographical Plan showing the site location.