PROPOSED BALAMHLANGA RIVER BRIDGE 3505 UPGRADE, UMKHANYAKUDE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL

PRE-APPLICATION MEETING WITH SIZA FROM DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND VARIOUS CONSULTANTS AT 10:00 ON 10TH SEPTEMBER 2021 ON MS TEAMS.

Please Note: These minutes were drawn from notes taken at the Pre-application Meeting and are not verbatim. We would also like to advise you that while utmost care was taken to record your comments accurately and faithfully, there may be some discrepancies between what has been written in the minutes that follow and what was actually said. Should you wish to have something changed we request that you contact us immediately.

Project Team Attendees

Mrs Siza Zungu	Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs
Mrs Rivani Maharaj	Afzelia Environmental Consultants
Mr Isaiah Varathan	Afzelia Environmental Consultants

1.Opening and Welcome

Siza Zuma discussed the pre-application agenda for the meeting.

2. Apologies

Andrew Batho & Happy Khambule

3. Project Description

The applicant, KZN Department of Transport (KZN DoT), have proposed an upgraded culvert / bridge structure as well as minor road realignment to replace the existing culvert crossing, which is not functioning optimally. The upgrade portion of the D1834 road is from KM 41+085 to KM 41+541. Information pertaining to the specifications of the proposed culvert upgrade and road realignment is limited, however, the preferred option drawing provided by Mott Macdonald (i.e., Profile Option 4) indicates that a culvert / bridge structure, approximately 56m in length and 7.5m wide, is proposed, whilst the overall road realignment includes a total of 456m of roadway which will also be 7.5m wide. The applicant wishes to change the project name from D1834 upgrade to Balamhlanga River Bridge 3505 upgrade. Some of the onsite notification conducted was done under D1834 upgrade.

4.Need and Desirability

Due to the size of the existing stormwater infrastructure and dilapidated condition, the stormwater flow emanating from the hardened areas in particular is impaired as in most cases the stormwater pipes are either broken or silted up. In addition, where the road surface is gravel, and poorly maintained, excessive scour, rutting and gravel loss has occurred. This contributes significantly to environmental degradation through sediment loaded run-off and erosion, impacting significantly on the road users and surrounding community.

Realignment of the road and upgrading the culvert will improve road safety and accessibility, improve road drainage systems, reduce road maintenance costs and reduce the potential for erosion and sedimentation of the stream, drainage lines and wetlands. In addition, the proposed realignment of the Road will improve general service delivery by Jozini Local Municipality in the area and create employment opportunities to the previously disadvantaged local communities during the construction phase of the project.

5.Alternatives

No alternative sites and design layouts have been assessed as the proposal includes the upgrade of the existing culvert, and the realignment of an existing used road.

The proposed design layout offers the highest levels of biophysical and environmental benefits, as the hard surface, in conjunction with the upgraded culvert, will manage water movement more effectively, minimise erosion from the road and the surrounding environment, and minimise the subsequent deposition of the eroded materials (sediment) into the river.

6. Listed Activities

Government Notice Number	Activity number	Description of each listed activity	Component of project
327	12	The development of – (ii) Infrastructure or structures with a physical footprint of 100 square metres or more Where such development occurs – (a) Within a watercourse; or Within 32 metres of a watercourse, measured from the edge of the watercourse	The site is located within the Balamhlanga River with the upgrade of the culvert crossing the river and the realignment of the occurring within 32m
327	19	The infilling or depositing of any material of more than 10 cubic metres into, or the dredging, excavation, removal or moving of soil, sand, shells, shell grit, pebbles or rock of more than 10 cubic metres from a watercourse.	The site is located within the Balamhlanga River with the upgrade of the culvert crossing the river and the realignment of the occurring within 32m
327	31	The decommissioning of existing facilities, structures or infrastructure for— any phased activity or activities for development and related operation activity or expansion or related operation activities listed in this Notice or Listing Notice 3 of 2014;	The proposed development will include the removal of the existing culvert.

7. Specialist Studies

- Aquatic Assessment;
- Vegetation Assessment;
- HIA exemption

8.Public Participation

BID process (Notification of project)

- Onsite notification
- Email notification for authorities
- Signboard notification

Draft BAR

- Advert notifying of availability of DBAR
- Notification of registered IAPS

9. Way Forward

- To confirm the activities that are triggered before we lodge the application .
- To receive engineering report and confirm size and details of road and culvert.
- Submit KML files for the positioning of the road and culvert.
- To confirm the amount of excavation that will be undertaken
- To confirm the total amount of clearance of vegetation
- Need to confirm if the bridge is going to be an upgrade on the existing location or moved.
- Explain the need for road realignment.
- To confirm the size of the road realignment whether it applies to activity 12 and to confirm if the realignment will be within 32m of the watercourse
- Confirm if the site falls within a rural or urban area.

10.Points that need clarity

- Road Length
- Length of the new or upgraded culvert
- If the area is Rural or not
- Engineer to confirm how much excavation will take place
- If it is considered upgrading and not a new development then the decommission does not apply
- The only activity that might trigger is activity 19 (dredging and excavation)
- How much vegetation that will be removed

10.CLOSURE

Meeting ends with greetings at approximately 11:10 AM