

Exemption of a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment for a proposed new overhead installation of a Vodacom optic fibre cable along provincial road reserves in the vicinity of Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province*.

Site: Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province

Map Ref.: 1:50 000 topographical map 2230CD Thohoyandou

Centroid coordinates: 22°56'18.46"S 30°37'44.95"E

Proposed development calls for the overhead (aboveground) installation of a 134 km – long Vodacom optic fibre cable along provincial road reserves in the vicinity of Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province (**Fig. 1 - 3**). In most areas, the optic fibre cable will be mounted on I-Section Poles either 9 metres or 11 metres high. The following will furthermore apply:

1. The 9m poles will be planted at a depth of 1.5 m and a hole will be opened for this purpose with the dimensions of 0.35m x 0.35m (= 0.1225m² or 0.147 m³);
2. The 11m poles will be planted at a depth of 1.7m and a hole will be opened for this purpose with the dimensions of 0.45m x 0.45m (= 0.2025m² or 0.3038 m³);
3. Poles will be planted at intervals ranging between 80 and 280 metres;
4. The crossing over the watercourse will be undertaken by overhead installation with a maximum of 3 I-Section Poles within the watercourse or within 100 metres of the watercourse.

Several surveys have been conducted in the region of the current proposed development area, particularly for the construction of the Nandoni Dam (<http://www.sahra.org.za/sahris>). Some MSA and Later Iron sites were located in the Mulenzhe area near Nandoni Dam, and in 1999 at a site 20km north of Giyani scattered decorated ceramics and stone waling was located. Desktop research could not find any records of archaeological or historical research in the Malamulele area and areas to the east of Thohoyandou. Prominent sites in the wider area such as Makapansgat that boast a large presence of ESA and MSA, and LSA in the Blouberg-Makgabeng area with over 700 recored Rock Art sites Eastwood & Hanisch 2003). From an archaeological perspective, the Vhembe district area, like most of Limpopo region has potential to yield Stone Age period sites (also see Deacon and Deacon, 1997).

In 1999 Roodt located a several stone walled structures, diagnostic pottery (identified as *Letaba* tradition); spindle whirls and slag about 20km north of Giyani. The pottery style is associated with BaVenda, although presently the area is predominantly a Tsonga area, oral history indicates that the Venda occupied this area. The sites include hilltop (probably the chief) and terrace settlement (commoners). Some of the most significant Later Iron Age sites in Limpopo are found in the Venda region, namely Thulamela, Dzata and Machema. The region was the centre of immigration and migration of different African groups some of which are ancestors of the modern day Venda and Tsonga groups predominant in the region. Throughout the middle of the 1800s the region witnessed the mfecane migrations and displacements linked to groups such as the Ndebele of Mzilikazi. From the 1840s the Voortrekker began arriving in the flat lands foothills in the regions spreading north east into modern day Limpopo. Since the study area is a predominantly residential area, and has been so many years, there are several sights of historic significance. These include graves older than 60 years in areas such as Mhinga Village, Mbahe, Xigalo, Mulenzhe, Makwarela to mention few. Phiphidi Sacred Falls are also a significant site a few kilometers north west of Thohoyandou, while the culturally significant natural inland lake, Lake Fundudzi, was declared a National Heritage site in 2014. Thohoyandou is a town located in Ha-Mphaphuli. It was named after the great king of Vhavenda, King Thohoyandou, who ruled the Vhavenda kingdom from the 1690s to the early 1720s. Today Thohoyandou is the second largest town in Venda after Makhado (Louis Trichardt). Thohoyandou was established and built at a large portion of the village of Mbaleni in the late 1970s. It was established by Thovhela Patrick Ramaano Mphephu who was the Prime Minister of the Venda Bantustan. Thohoyandou became the capital of Venda when it was declared a 'republic' in 1979.

There are seven water course crossings on the Thohoyandou route, which will require two Section Poles for each crossing (one on each side of the watercourse). The majority of the optic fiber route will be located outside the town of Thohoyandou on degraded terrain in a built-up area, and on land formerly altered by informal settlement and road construction. Potential archaeological impact that may result from the installation of the overhead fibre optic cable is considered to extremely low. It is recommended that the proposed development is exempt from a Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Rossouw'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'L' being particularly large and stylized.

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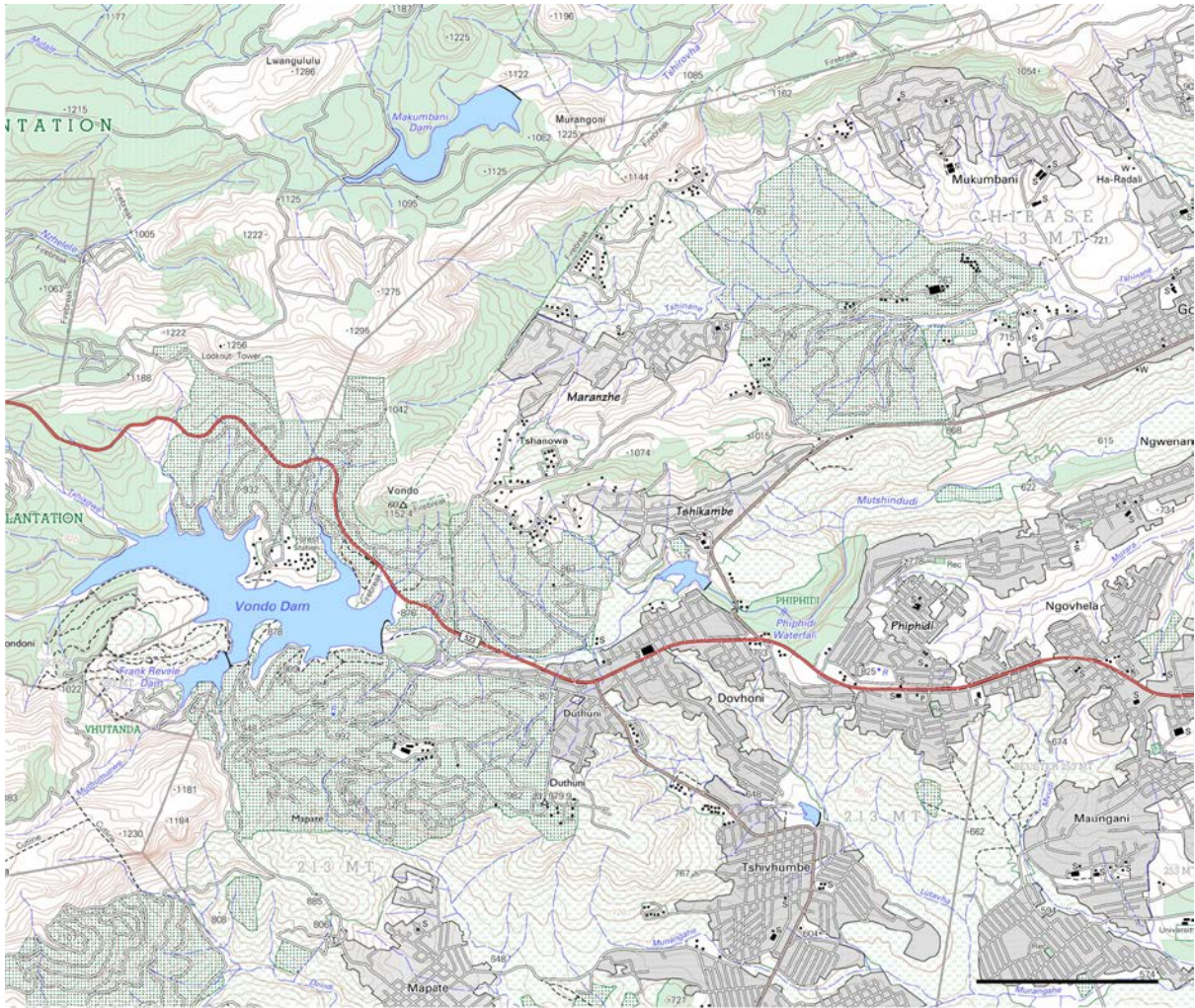


Figure 1. Map of Thohoyandou and environs (portion of 1:50 000 scale topographical map 2230CD Thohoyandou).

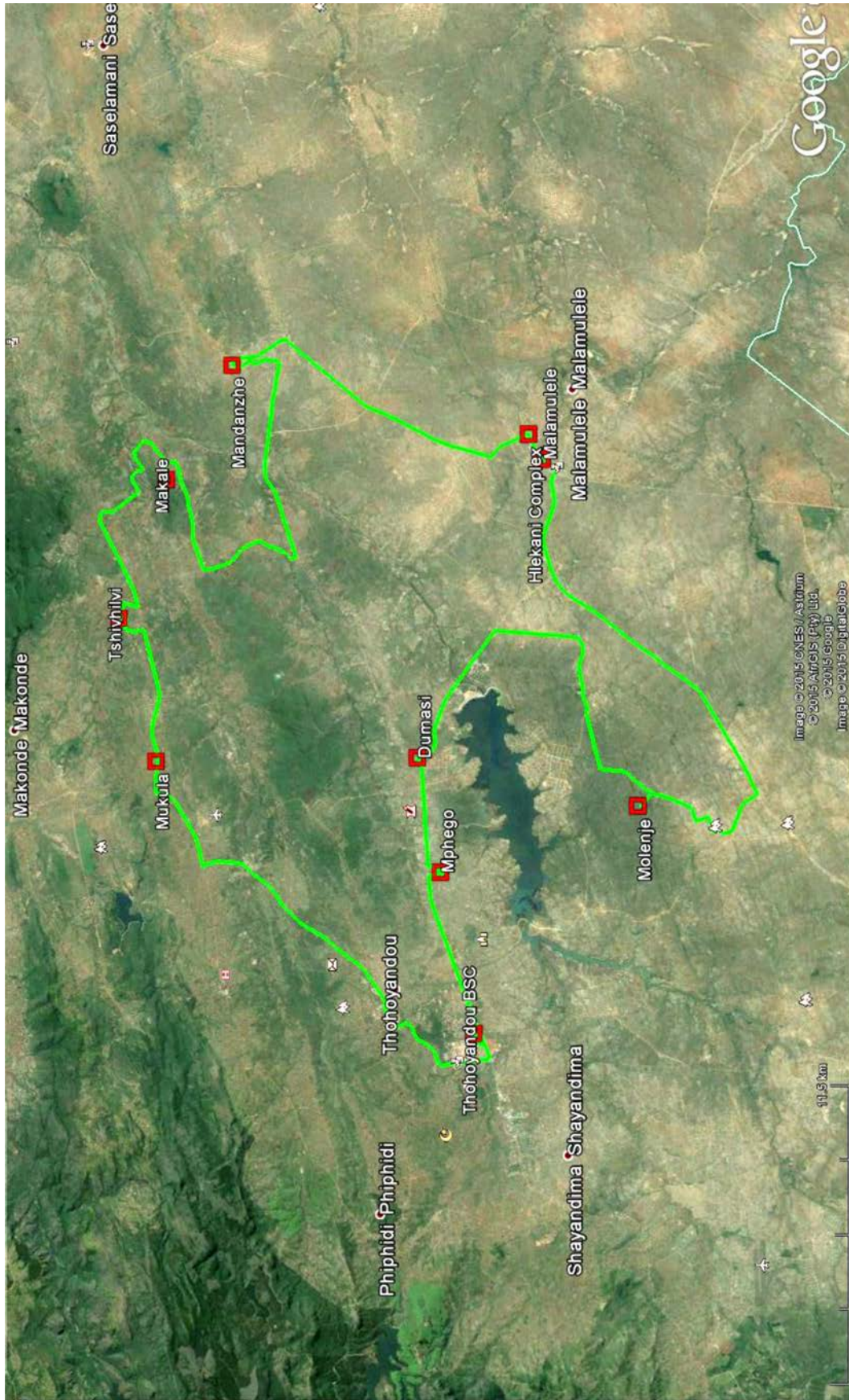


Figure 2.. Aerial view of the proposed optical fibre route (green line).



Figure 3. View of the road reserve along the proposed route.