

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING REPORT

PROPOSED TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON:

KLARINET INTEGRATED HOUSING

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Section 21 of the Environment Conservation Act (No. 73 of 1989, ECA), and the subsequent Government Notice R1182, an application for change of land use from agricultural or undetermined use to any other land use, requires authorisation from the competent environmental authority. The relevant authority in this case is the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs (MDALA).

The environmental scoping report was compiled by Clean Stream Environmental Services. The applicant, on behalf of the Emalahleni Local Municipality and Absa Property Development (Pty) Ltd, intends to establish a Township made up of approximately 12 469 housing opportunities.

The proposed development is situated on the Portions 26, 153, 154, 156, 171, 172, 190, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 226, the Remainder of Portion 98 and Remainder of Portion 188 of the Farm Blesboklaagte 296JS, Emalahleni – known as Phase 2. And secondly, Portions 104, 124, 132, 148, 158, 153, 163, 210, the Remainder of Portion 187, A Portion of 189 and the Remainder of 218, Emalahleni – Known as Phase 1. This is located towards the north of Emalahleni and in close proximity to the existing residential areas of Pine Ridge and Klarinet.

The area for the proposed development measures approximately 638 hectares in extent.

Phase 1 of the project is further divided into 3 erven – namely Klarinet Extension 6, Klarinet Extension 8 and Klarinet Extension 7.

The proposed residential township will provide for the following:

Subsidised Housing

Approximately 6247 subsidy units will be made available in the development, which will be approximately 50% of the housing typologies within the development.

Institutional Housing

Approximately 2322 institutional / rental units have been earmarked.

Bonded Housing

Approximately 3900 bonded units will be made available in the development, which will be approximately 31% of the housing typologies within the development.

Business and Commercial Zones

A central business district has been earmarked within the development for business and commercial purposes along the main spine road, as well as several smaller sites within the development. Phase 1C (Klarinet Extension 7) is will predominately offer industrial sites.

Educational Facilities

5 sites have been earmarked as potential primary and high schools within the development. Preliminary investigation has indicated a possible 3 sites for Primary Schools, whilst 2 sites have been earmarked for Secondary Schools. In addition to the primary and secondary schools, several sites have also been earmarked as facilities for a crèche.

Places of Worship

Several sites have been earmarked throughout the development as sites for church facilities.

Public Open Space

Through the Environmental Impact Assessment, several sites throughout the development have been identified as areas for Public Open Space as these are not suitable for development.

2. NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The present conditions in which the residents of informal settlements are living (densely packed shacks) do not constitute an environment that is safe or healthy. The lack of adequate services and infrastructure exacerbate this situation.

The Emalahleni Local Municipality has identified two informal settlements that will be relocated to the Klarinet Integrated Housing project. The identification and verification of the individual beneficiaries is underway.

A market study undertaken by Demacon Market Studies (July 2010) has indicated that there is a demand for both bonded affordable housing as well as rental stock in the Klarinet area.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The environmental investigation and approval process has substantially been completed for Phase 1 of the development. A Record of Decision for Klarinet Extension 6 has been received. The Record of Decision for Extension 7 has been issued but due to the elapsed time and changes in the layout and zoning, the RoD has expired. An application for exemption has been submitted. The Scoping Report for Extension 8 has been completed and submitted to the Mpumalanga Department of Agricultural and Land Affairs for approval. The Record of Decision is eminent.

The environmental scan has been conducted for Phase 2 of the development. In general, it is evident that the proposed development site is suitable for residential development. No drainage lines, streams, rivers or wetlands have their origin on the said site. No threatened plant or animal species are known to occur within the proposed development site.

It should be noted that the proposed site for Phase 2 appears to be located on a catchment divide. The determination of this catchment divide would be very important since it could impact on the services (water and sewage) required for the integrated housing development as well as the storm water management measures to be provided.

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, the following would however need to be verified:

- The current status of the secondary/disturbed grassland vegetation unit;
- The presence of rocky outcrops within the Secondary/Disturbed Grassland vegetation unit which could provide suitable habitat for the Rocky Grassland vegetation unit and associated animals (e.g. reptiles);
- The presence of suitable habitat for the following endangered plant species within the Secondary/Disturbed Grassland/Rocky Grassland vegetation units: *Frithia humilis* and *Elephantorrhiza oblique*;

- The presence of wet spots within the shallow to moderately deep yellow soils (SY) due to natural seepage and lateral movement of water on shallow restricting layers such as hard plinthite and hard rock.
- The presence of any sites of archaeological and cultural interest (including graves).
- The status of the land claim lodged against the farm Blesboklaagte 296 JS.

From this environmental scan, it is evident that the previous and current mining activities pose the biggest problem with regards to the proposed development of this area. The following needs to be determined before any development planning takes place:

- The exact extent of the undermining;
- The exact extent of the open cast mining area;
- The identification of geotechnically unsuitable areas;

The Department of Minerals and Energy and the mining company, BHP Billiton, would have to be consulted with regards to the rehabilitation of this defunct mining area since it would pose a safety risk in terms of the proposed residential area to be developed. The establishment of the residential area will result in an increase of people in the area, which would mean more pedestrians crossing the unrehabilitated mining areas in order to reach the Emalahleni CBD or any other areas of interest. Crossing these areas could result in injury or death due to the sinkholes/subsidence and could increase the liability for the various mining groups and that of the project applicant/land owner.

The rehabilitation of these areas is of importance in order to ensure the safety of persons living in the area and especially, in view of Emalahleni expanding into this area.