

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING REPORT

PROPOSED TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON:

THE REMAINDER OF PORTION 28 OF THE FARM MODDERFONTEIN IR

CHIEF ALBERT LUTHULI EXT 6

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 Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Development and the Environment (GDACE).

The environmental scoping report was compiled by Tswelopele Environmental (Pty) Ltd. The applicant, on behalf of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, intends to establish a Township made up of approximately 7278 housing opportunities.

The proposed development is situated on the remainder of Portion 28 of the Farm Mooderfontein 76 IR, which is located approximately 8km northeast of the Benoni Central Business District and directly west of Daveyton. Daveyton is located directly to the east of the site.

A natural watercourse originates along the south-western boundary of the property and drains in a southerly direction. The area for the proposed development measures approximately 205 hectares in extent.

The proposed residential township will provide for the following:

Subsidised Housing

Approximately 3983 subsidy units will be made available in the development, which will be approximately 60% of the housing typologies within the development.

Institutional Housing

Sites have been earmarked for high density housing, which may be utilised as institutional housing, and is dependant on the demand for the sites.

Bonded Housing

Approximately 3295 bonded units will be made available in the development, which will be approximately 40% 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.

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) does not constitute an environment that is safe or healthy. The lack of adequate services and infrastructure exacerbate this situation. The aim of this development is the re-settlement of the Gabon informal Settlement (approximately 3.5km east of the site) and the provision of sustainable affordable housing in the shortest possible period in terms of the housing Act. The existing site on which the Gabon informal settlement is located is unsuitable for a housing development. The relocation of the settlement will eliminate the environmental impacts on this site. This development is in line with the planning policies of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

The sooner this settlement is formalised and all necessary services are provided, the better the living conditions for the people currently living in informal settlements. The de-densification and consolidation of the informal settlement and focus on the

upgrading and provision of social services, infrastructure, shelter and transport connections will help to relieve some of the problems associated with informal settlements.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Extract out of the scoping report”

The potential environmental impacts for various aspects were determined for the proposed development according to a standardized rating criteria. Based on these criteria the significance of the various impacts with and without corrective actions are summarized below.

The site is currently used for agriculture in the form of cultivated fields and a *Eucalyptus* plantation. The site predominantly consists of an urban open space besides the agriculturally related structures built on the site. Currently open space, residential areas and small holdings surround the site. Daveyton is located directly to the west of the site and Chief Albert Luthuli Park Ext 4 is located directly to the south west of the site. Chief Albert Luthuli Park and Extensions 1-3 low cost housing suburbs are planned for the area south of the site. The infill development will aid in joining the two previously segregated communities of “white” Benoni and “black” Daveyton.

Higher density developments tend to result in higher impacts on the environment. As a result, environmental studies must be undertaken in order to assess the best and most optimum use of space within the city for the benefit of both the people and the environment. In order to obtain more in-depth information on these issues, site specific information is required. Specialist input on certain important aspects of the site in question and proposed development, an ecological investigation, heritage impact assessment, traffic impact assessment, agricultural potential study and geotechnical study were undertaken for the site.

The impact evaluation during the construction phase (as seen in Table 8.1) revealed no fatal flaws.. Certain impacts were moderate and it is recommended that all mitigation/preventative actions are implemented.

The impact evaluation during the operational phase (as seen in Table 8.2) also revealed no fatal flaws. Certain impacts were moderate and it is recommended that construction should not take place unless the mitigation/preventative actions are implemented. The majority of the impacts with mitigation are low with some of the impacts being positive. This is the same trend for the construction phase.

The ecological investigation revealed that the site may potentially be a habitat for certain endangered and near threatened fauna and flora. As a result, specific areas on the site have been identified as being environmentally sensitive areas, namely the wetland region to the south west of the site and the farm dam on the south eastern portion of the site. It is suggested that no development takes place on the environmentally sensitive areas as well as a 50 meter buffer zone around these area. Furthermore it is suggested that the highly sensitive areas be zoned as open space and that they are protected and maintained by the city as such. It is suggested that the buffer zones are declared as public open spaces (parks) and maintained by the city as such.

In order to maintain and protect these areas, an adequate stormwater control system has been designed. Even though the dams form the function of slowing down stormwater and stopping siltation of the wetland, proper anti-erosion measures must be put in place to protect the topsoil on the site, especially since it is of a reasonably good quality.

It has been recommended in the geotechnical investigations reveal that Zone C consisting of the vleis areas and earth dam should not be developed but rather utilized for open space. The

geotechnical Zone C and environmentally sensitive areas overlap in certain instances. The ecologically sensitive areas should also not be developed and be utilized for open space.

According to the geotechnical investigations, old rubbish pits, French drains or septic tanks may be found on site. These would have to be rehabilitated prior to construction which would involve excavation and backfilling with suitable inert material compacted in layers. The same type of measures should be implemented with the old sludge beds or oxidation ponds found on the central eastern, north and north eastern portions of the site.

The agricultural potential study revealed that the majority of the site has a moderate or high agricultural potential with the lowest southern portion with a low potential and an area on the southern portion as high. Alternative layout plans have been suggested in the alternative in order to attempt to best utilize this agricultural land. The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality have indicated that they do not support the mixed land-use development on this site as there is ample undermined ground south of the site which has been earmarked for agriculture. The most efficient and effective land use on the site would be for low cost housing as the site is suitable for such a development, there is a limited amount of suitable land for such developments, the site is in close proximity to other such residential land uses and there is sufficient infrastructure for such a development. A mixed-land use approach would not be feasible in the implementation of low cost housing, especially in view of the demand for such housing.

Certain area have been suggested as possible open space/urban agriculture/parks. Urban agriculture should not take place in the high or medium sensitive areas within this greenbelt. Restricting residents from entering and affecting this area may prove to be difficult as it is a greenbelt and access to such public places may be difficult. We do not suggest individually fencing off these areas as this would prevent migration from taking place across this open space area and defeat the point of creating such a greenbelt. It is therefore suggested that:

- Pallsade fencing be placed to prevent free access to these areas by residents thus making it more difficult for residents to access these areas. Entrances to the areas should be placed at some distance from the wetland on the south western portion of the site.
- The pallsade fencing be placed before construction to prevent access of construction equipment and materials into this area.
- The educational facility and community facilities placed next to the greenbelt be approached and are utilised to help and preserve this area.
- The option of declaring the wetland area as a conservancy be explored.
- Certain I&APs have expressed an interest in aiding the community in this development. These I&APs should be consulted regarding possible consortiums which could be set up in order to aid in the management and protection of this area.
- No road access is provided to the site through the open space/urban agriculture areas between the areas to the south of the site (Chief Albert Luthuli Park and extensions) and the propose township.

It is recommended, from an environmental perspective, that the development does go ahead provided that the mitigation and preventative actions laid out in this report are complied with. No Environmental Impact Assessment or further specialist studies are suggested and all relevant information for a decision on the proposed development to be made is contained within this report.