

PROPOSED WIDENING OF THE N3 BETWEEN DURBAN AND CEDARA, KWAZULU-NATAL and PROPOSED WIDENING OF THE N2 BETWEEN UMGENI ROAD AND SOLOMON MAHLANGU (EDWIN SWALES). APPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION AND WATER USE LICENSES

RECORD OF MEETING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & CLIMATE PROTECTION DEPARTMENT, DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND MANAGEMENT UNIT, ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

Date: 12 March 2015

Venue: 166 KE Masinga Road, Durban, 4001

Time: 09.30 – 11.30 am

Agenda:

#	Time	Item/Presentation	Responsible
1.	09.30 -09.35	Welcome, Introduction & Purpose of Meeting	Busi Mlambo, SANRAL
2	09.35- 09.45	Engineering overview of the N3 widening project between Durban and Cedara, focusing on EB Cloete to Cato Ridge	Freek Serton, Hatch/Goba
3	09.45-09.55	Engineering overview - N3 EB Cloete to Paradise Valley	Neil Bloy, SNA
4	09.55- 10.05	Engineering overview - N3 Key Ridge to Hammarsdale	R von Fintel. Royal Haskoning
5	10.05 – 10.15	Environmental overview - N3 EB Cloete to Cato Ridge	A. McKenzie, ACER
6	10.15 - 10.25	Environmental overview - N3 Key Ridge	John Richardson, Jeffares and Green
	10.25-10.40	TEA BREAK	
7	10.40 – 10.45	Overview of DMOSS and role of Ethekwini Environmental Planning	Ethekwini Environmental Planning
8	10.45 – 11.05	Areas of biodiversity & environmental concerns	Ethekwini Environmental Planning
9	11.05-11.30	Discussion and questions	All
10	11.30	Closure	Busi Mlambo, SANRAL

Attendance:

- Mr Richard Boon, Conservation and Biodiversity, Environmental Planning & Climate Protection Department, Ethekwini Municipality
- Mr Greg Mullins, Environmentalist: Biodiversity Impact Assessment , Environmental Planning & Climate Protection Department, Ethekwini Municipality
- Ms Busi Mlambo, Environmental Co-ordinator, South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) Eastern Region
- Mr Freek Serton, Project Manager for N3 Upgrades Paradise Valley to Cedara (excluding Key Ridge-Hammarsdale, Ashburton Interchange, Epworth -Market Road), Hatch Goba Consulting Engineers
- Mr Neil Bloy, Project Manager for N3 Upgrades EB Cloete to Paradise Valley, SNA Consulting Engineers
- Ms Ashleigh McKenzie, Environmental Impact Assessment Practitioner for N3 Upgrades Paradise Valley to Cedara, (excluding Key Ridge-Hammarsdale, Ashburton Interchange, Epworth -Market Road), ACER (Africa) Environmental Management Consultants
- Mr Barry Patrick , Vegetation Ecologist, ACER (Africa) Environmental Management Consultants

- Mr John Richardson, Environmental Impact Assessment Practitioner for N3 Upgrades Key Ridge, Jeffares and Green

Apologies:

- Mr Ravi Roni, Project Manager for N3 Upgrades Durban-Cedara, South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) Eastern Region
- Mr Frans Kokot, Design Engineer, Hatch Goba Consulting Engineers
- Mr Rudi von Fintel, RHDHV (Market Road-Epworth)

Meeting objectives:

- To introduce the proposed project (upgrade of N3 Durban-Cedara, focusing on areas within Ethekwini Municipality boundaries, viz EB Cloete to Cato Ridge) to Ethekwini Environmental Planning Department and provide an engineering and environmental overview
- To get comment on relevant DMOSS and biodiversity issues and discuss particular areas of concern.

Main items raised in the meeting

1. Presentations

- Engineering and environmental overview presentations were given as indicated in the Agenda, excluding item 4 which was covered under item 2.

2. Project configuration & timing

- The project is divided up into 10 separate sections for detailed design and construction, different sections being handled by different teams of engineers and environmental consultants. Pertinent to Ethekwini are:
 - N3 EB Cloete - Paradise Valley, N2 Umgeni – Solomon Mahlangu (SNA, ACER)
 - Paradise Valley to Key Ridge (Hatch Goba, ACER)
 - Key Ridge – Hammarsdale (Ilifa, Jeffares and Green)
 - Hammarsdale – Cato Ridge (Hatch Goba, ACER)
 *Note that the upgrade of the Hammarsdale Interchange is running ahead of these projects
- There is no schedule as yet for this project, although 4 sections have been put out to detailed design tender. Possibly 2017/2018.

3. Summary Project Description N3 widening Paradise Valley to Cedara

- N3 is operating at full capacity and project aims to provide additional traffic carrying capacity and safety improvements.
- The project will widen the current N3 between Durban and Cedara from 2-3 lanes in each direction, to 4-5 lanes in each direction.
- Widening will use up the entire existing median (concrete barrier to divide the opposing lanes) and then work outwards. Where there is insufficient space provided by the median and existing road reserve, additional road reserve will be needed.
- The widening is a major undertaking affecting almost every bridge and interchange, requiring modification or rebuilding of interchanges, overpasses, etc. Demolition of old structures will occur.
- Project will provide sufficient traffic carrying capacity up to 2047, whereafter no further widening can be done on the N3 and different solutions will have to be implemented to manage further growth in traffic.
- Road surfacing to be used is concrete at present. However, engineers are also currently considering "high modulus Asphalt" which is cheaper, less noisy, and easier to maintain.

4. Summary Project Description N2 Widening between Umgeni and Solomon Mahlangu (Edwin Swales) and N3 Widening EB Cloete to Paradise Valley

- This section in the major urban area of Ethekeeni is operating at full capacity and requires more lanes viz 7 lanes in each direction except Spine to Paradise will be 6.
- Involves major interchanges viz Solomon Mahlangu (N2) , EB Cloete (N2), Spine Road (N3), Paradise Valley (N3).
- As per the other sections of N3, widening will up the entire median (concrete barrier will divide the opposing sides of the N3) and then work outwards. Retaining walls required where there are cuts, and reinforcing on fills, to confine the works within the existing road reserve where possible. Additional road reserve will be needed in places.
- Will provide sufficient traffic carrying capacity up to 2047, whereafter no further widening can be done.

5. Summary Environmental Issues N2 Widening between Umgeni and Solomon Mahlangu (Edwin Swales) and N3 Widening EB Cloete to Cato Ridge (excluding Key Ridge)

- Applications (2010 EIA Regulations) have lapsed and new applications to be submitted under 2014 EIA Regulations for Basic Assessments.
- No public participation held to date (but SANRAL has initiated property owner negotiations and Hammarsdale Interchange ppp is in process). Limited Key stakeholder engagement held to date with Department of Water and Sanitation; Ethekeeni Municipality.
- Specialist findings:
 - Terrestrial & riparian ecology issues**
 - Significant level of transformation, disturbance and alien plant invasion
 - D'MOSS (including municipal nature reserves)
 - Westville, Paradise and uMhlatazana Viaducts – require access through forest vegetation
 - Threatened Terrestrial Ecosystems
 - Biodiversity Priority Areas
 - Potential occurrence of red data species
 - Wetlands and river crossings (58) – WULAS required
 - Cultural heritage issues**
 - Umbilo Waterworks (Paradise Valley)
 - Rock Shelter (Giba Nature Reserve)
 - A few buildings to be demolished – some potentially > 60 years old – still to be confirmed.
 - Noise issues**
 - Current levels exceed SANS standards within approx 270 m from edge of road. Sensitive areas- various residential areas in close proximity to N3
 - Noise levels will increase
 - Requires mitigation during construction.
 - Design for operation will need to incorporate noise mitigation

6. Summary Environmental Issues Key Ridge

- Two alternatives for Key Ridge
 - Alternative 1: The Viaduct Alternative on eastern side of existing key Ridge, over the Drummond area (preferred).
 - Alternative 2: Upgrading of the existing N3 Alignment Alternative .
- Specialist findings:
 - Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)**
 - No Heritage sites noted due to slopes and historical disturbance.
 - Recommendation that older houses on the alignment are assessed by an architect historian (Peacevale Kennels and Neighbours).
 - Biodiversity Assessment (Flora, Fauna & Riparian)**

- Generally high levels of disturbance as a result of human activities in the area.
- Five survey sites on watercourses affected by the proposal were considered (upstream and downstream)
- Quantifiable surveys on the rivers / streams indicate systems are well below norms for the region.
- SASS Class D, Fish Class E / F

Visual Impact Assessment

- Medium-high impact with mitigation.
- Various foreground and middle ground screening mitigation recommended to limit impact.

Noise Impact Assessment

- Baseline noise subject to some variability but in most instances already above SANS guidelines of 55 dB(A) daytime and 45 dB(A) night time. Expected given the proximity of the N3 to the surrounding dwellings.
- Overall moderate increase in noise impacts due to the viaduct (operational)

Social Impact Assessment

- Significant social impacts for surrounding / directly affected community members.
- Significant positive social impacts related to reduced injury and accident rates on this section of road.
- Communication channels between SANRAL and local community deemed critical to minimize community concern.

- WULA requirements: – in the absence of any wetlands within 500m, will probably be a General Authorisation for river crossings

7. Summary Viaduct Access Requirements & impacts

- It is necessary to provide access for heavy plant into the areas under the viaducts.
- At least a 7 m wide road required.
- Large work areas required around each foundation and for turning.
- The road reserve under the viaduct will be cleared of vegetation – high impact during construction.
- SANRAL committed to rehabilitation of these impacted areas.

8. DMOSS – Durban Metropolitan Open Space System

- DMOSS is a planning layer which flags open space and biodiversity which are of value for biodiversity conservation, to inform town planners. It is not a zonation in itself but overlaid onto zoned areas.
- DMOSS uses 2010 mapping. It does not always reflect the current state of transformation of the DMOSS site. More current mapping will be available this year.
- It is used to assist the city in implementing best practise for environmental sustainability.
- Ethekwini Environmental Planning attempts to apply restrictions/management for DMOSS areas fairly across the board. Avoidance of DMOSS areas is preferred. Usually, application must be made to the city to develop DMOSS areas.
- However, in this case being a SIP2 project and strategic for the city as well as the country, they accept that the N2/N3 development cannot avoid some DMOSS areas. Their approach is thus one of positive and constructive engagement, co-operative governance.
- Principles applying are to minimise footprints where avoidance is not possible, mitigate impacts and consider offset where mitigation is not possible.

9. Biodiversity hotspots of highest concern

- Viaducts – Westville, Paradise Valley, Giba (Umhlatzana) of primary importance for mitigation especially considering the high impact.
- Alverstone Hillside.

- Grassland north of Bartlett Estate near Hammarsdale Interchange has been purchased for conservation of KZN Sandstone Sourveld (Critically Endangered Vegetation Type).
- An area of land at Peacevale is now owned by the city for conservation of KZN Sandstone Sourveld (not affected by the project?)
- Affected water courses and crossings.
- **It was agreed that Ethekwini and the N3 team need to visit the sites under the viaducts to find the best solution for access, as well as go to the other sensitive sites to discuss optimal ways of mitigating impacts or offsetting if necessary. The reserve managers will be included (Terry and Lyle).**
- **Ethekwini to provide ACER with kml files of hotspots and sensitive areas.**
- **ACER to set up the site visits.**

10. Creatures crossing

- It is extremely difficult for any animals to cross the N2/N3. Further widening will effectively create islands i.e. no connectivity between each side of the N3 for terrestrial creatures.
- **Ethekwini to pinpoint hotspots where animals cross and N3 team look at ways to facilitate crossing (under or over passes).**

11. Control of alien invasive plants

- Control of alien invasive plants in the road reserves – suggested this is done not only as environmental best practise but also in order to enhance aesthetics and create a positive impression to travellers as the national roads are the gateway into the City. This is an opportunity to make a big positive difference as the road reserves are on view to millions of people.
- Noted that while special rehabilitation efforts by SANRAL sometimes are “wasted”, as these areas get destroyed again by further widening, in this case as no more widening can occur, so this should not present a problem for SANRAL.
- **This issue will be considered by team, provision made in the EMP and financial provision must be made. Ethekwini to input on suitable species (taking into account road safety and maintenance issues).**

12. Road building materials

- Procurement of materials to be done responsibly as illegal mining is a problem for the city.
- Hatch confirmed that the contractors will be sourcing materials from commercial sources and demolition material will be used for fill where possible although the timing may hinder this process.

13. Site camps

- Site camps should not be placed in sensitive areas.
- The contractors locate their own site camps so the project at this stage does not control that. However, we can indicate no go areas.
- **Ethekwini to provide a list of no go areas for site camps.**

14. Loss of valuable/ protected plants - plant rescue

- Where plant rescue has to be undertaken, bear in mind that Ethekwini now has areas of land which need to be populated so there will be place to take rescued plants in collaboration with Ethekwini.