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BASIC ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED IRT PHASE 2A TRUNK ROUTE: PORTION E1, 3.5KM OF GOVAN MBEKI ROAD, MANENBERG & GUGULETHU: FOCUS GROUP MEETING WITH CITY OF CAPE TOWN REPRESENTATIVES

PRE-APPLICATION REFERENCE NUMBER: 16/3/3/6/7/1/A2/19/3028/18

MINUTES- FINAL

MEETING DATE: 14 February 2018
VENUE: Ground floor, 3 Victoria Road, Plumstead, 7800
TIME: 10h00 – 11h30
ARRANGED BY: Chand
CHAIR: Ms. Marielle Penwarden

1. ATTENDEES

FULL NAME	INITIAL	ORGANISATION
Mr. Rashaad Samaai	RS	City of Cape Town Environment and Heritage Management Branch
Mr. Abdulla Parker	AP	City of Cape Town: Catchment Planning: Region 2 (South)
Mr. Dalton Gibbs	DG	City of Cape Town: Biodiversity Management Branch
Mr. Walter Williams	WW	City of Cape Town TDA Asset Management Roads
Mr. Justin Smit	JS	City of Cape Town: Catchment Stormwater and River Management
Mr. Eugenio Mazzarella	EM	GIBB (Pty) Ltd (Project Manager)
Ms. Marielle Penwarden	MP	Chand Environmental Consultants (Environmental Assessment Practitioner)

2. APOLOGIES

FULL NAME	INITIAL	ORGANISATION
Mr. Grant Rigby	GR	City of Cape Town District Roads and Stormwater: TDA Cape Town
Mr. Mark Doubell	MD	City of Cape Town TDA

3. AGENDA

- Welcome and Introduction (MP)
- Project Description (MP)
- Status of the Basic Assessment process (MP)
- Specialist Findings (MP)
- The City's Expectations Regarding the Process (RS, AP, DG, WW, JS)
- Questions and Answers (ALL)
 - a) Are there any potential issues related to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park or the pavement trees?
 - b) Are there any other stakeholders within CCT who should be contacted?
 - c) Additional questions...
- Other (ALL)
- Close (MP)

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Welcome and Introduction

- a) MP welcomed all attendees to the meeting, thanking them for their time.
- b) It was asserted by AP that the project managers from the City of Cape Town should be present at these meetings. EM assured AP that he, as the appointed project manager and representative of GIBB (Pty) Ltd, would provide the necessary feedback to the project owners.

4.2. Project Description

Refer to the attached presentation.

- a) MP emphasised that the proposed development footprint for the preferred alternative is for the largest footprint possible, however during detailed design the footprint may be reduced in certain sections of the route in response to design requirements or constraints on the ground. She highlighted that the footprint is, however, unlikely to be reduced from that applied for in the section adjacent to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.
- b) WW stated that the portion of land at the Vanguard Drive/ Govan Mbeki Road intersection to the south of Govan Mbeki Road is currently going through a rezoning (refer to slide 7 of the presentation) and EM confirmed that the project team is aware of this.

4.3. Status of the Basic Assessment process

Refer to the attached presentation.

- a) MP highlighted that it is important to obtain feedback from key stakeholders such that any significant issues may be addressed prior to the publication of the post-application draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) for the statutory 30-day public comment period.
- b) MP also pointed out that one round of public comment on the Basic Assessment Report is planned.

4.4. Specialist Findings

Refer to the attached presentation.

- a) MP did not raise anything in addition to that included in the presentation under this item.
- b) DG stated that there is a threatened endemic fern species located close to the road just east of the Edith Stephens nature reserve, to the west of the chicken farm. He pointed out that there are many threatened species located within the periphery of the Edith Stephens Wetland Park and not just in the centre.
- c) DG added that there is also an old farmhouse in the Edith Stephens Wetland Park which would be considered important from a heritage perspective, however he acknowledged that it is located significantly far from the proposed route that it would not likely be affected.

4.5. The City's Expectations Regarding the Process

4.5.1.Reducing the impacts on the Edith Stephens Wetland Park

- a) DG stated that it is important to consider the edge effect resulting from the loss of the vegetated buffer between Govan Mbeki Road and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park. He stated that the loss of the buffer would contribute to a reduction in ecological integrity of the edge of the Edith Stephens Wetland Park (i.e. within the nature reserve) and that this effect could range from approximately 5m to 20m wide. DG clarified that this presents the potential risk of losing a significant portion of the nature reserve, if unmitigated. He advised that a distinct barrier between the road and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park would be required whereby the catchment areas are completely separated.
- b) EM suggested that a dike could be constructed along the edge between the road and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park and that the dike could also extend sufficiently below ground level to ensure that sub-surface flow is also separated.
- c) DG agreed with the proposed construction of a dike as it would appropriately separate the catchment areas as well as serve to prevent nutrient transfer from the road to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.
- d) AP asked where the nutrients would flow and EM confirmed that they would be directed away from the Edith Stephens Wetland Park and into the Lotus Canal.

- e) AP queried whether the construction of a dike would be viable in terms of the project budget and EM stated that the viability should be considered in terms of the greater IRT project scope and that this project team cannot speak to that point.
- f) MP confirmed that she would query the implication of this mitigation measure in terms of the anticipated impacts (associated with the loss of the vegetated buffer) with the botanist and that she would recommend the inclusion of the construction of a dike to separate nutrient flow as a condition of Environmental Authorisation in the Basic Assessment Report.
- g) EM noted that the Stormwater Management Plan would be updated to provide clarity on the separation of the catchment areas of the road and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.
- h) DG added that the treatment of the edge between the road and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park is also important from a pedestrian perspective and MP confirmed that she would include in the Basic Assessment Report a recommendation that, during the detail design phase, the team are to liaise closely with the City of Cape Town Biodiversity branch and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park management in this regard.

4.5.2. Ecological Offsets

- a) RS queried whether any offsets (i.e. wetland or biodiversity) had been recommended and MP confirmed that no offsets have been recommended by the specialists or CapeNature, adding that CapeNature had alluded to the possibility of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) requesting a wetland offset, which had been done for the western component. MP postulated that the motivation for the offset may be related to hydrology in order to ensure sustained control and processing of stormwater in spite of additional hard surfacing and a reduction in stormwater attenuation in certain areas.
- b) MP indicated that contact had been made with the DWS, but that their feedback remained outstanding.
- c) RS noted that, as far as he could recall, an offset was recommended for the west which required the rehabilitation of a particular wetland along the route, however that this was later changed to the provision of rehabilitation within the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.
- d) AP stated that offsetting the wetland would be significant and that it is important to make the proposal environmentally and hydrologically viable.
- e) MP confirmed that she would review the Basic Assessment Report for the western component of the IRT route to ascertain the offset requirements therein and the motivation behind them. She added that similar recommendations would be made as part of the E1 Basic Assessment process, if appropriate. **Post-meeting note:** Based on the Final Basic Assessment Report written by Environmental Partnership, it was found that a portion of two wetlands would require infilling (refer to Figure 1) and that a section of the Big Lotus River would be affected. The present ecological status of all freshwater bodies was considered to be low, however the conservation status of the Big Lotus River was ascribed a medium rating, given its location upstream of the Zeekoevlei Ramsar wetlands. The ecological significance of the loss of the wetlands is considered to be of "medium negative significance – a rating that takes account of the existing level of degradation and fragmentation of the system, but also of the rapid rate of degradation of Cape Town's wetlands" (Day, 2017). The particular nature of the ideal offset (i.e. the rehabilitation of some of the Edith Stephens Wetland Park), which was ultimately recommend, was achieved through the receipt of comments from Dr. Patricia Holmes of the City of Cape Town Biodiversity Management branch. This information will be provided to the freshwater ecologist for this Basic Assessment process for consideration.

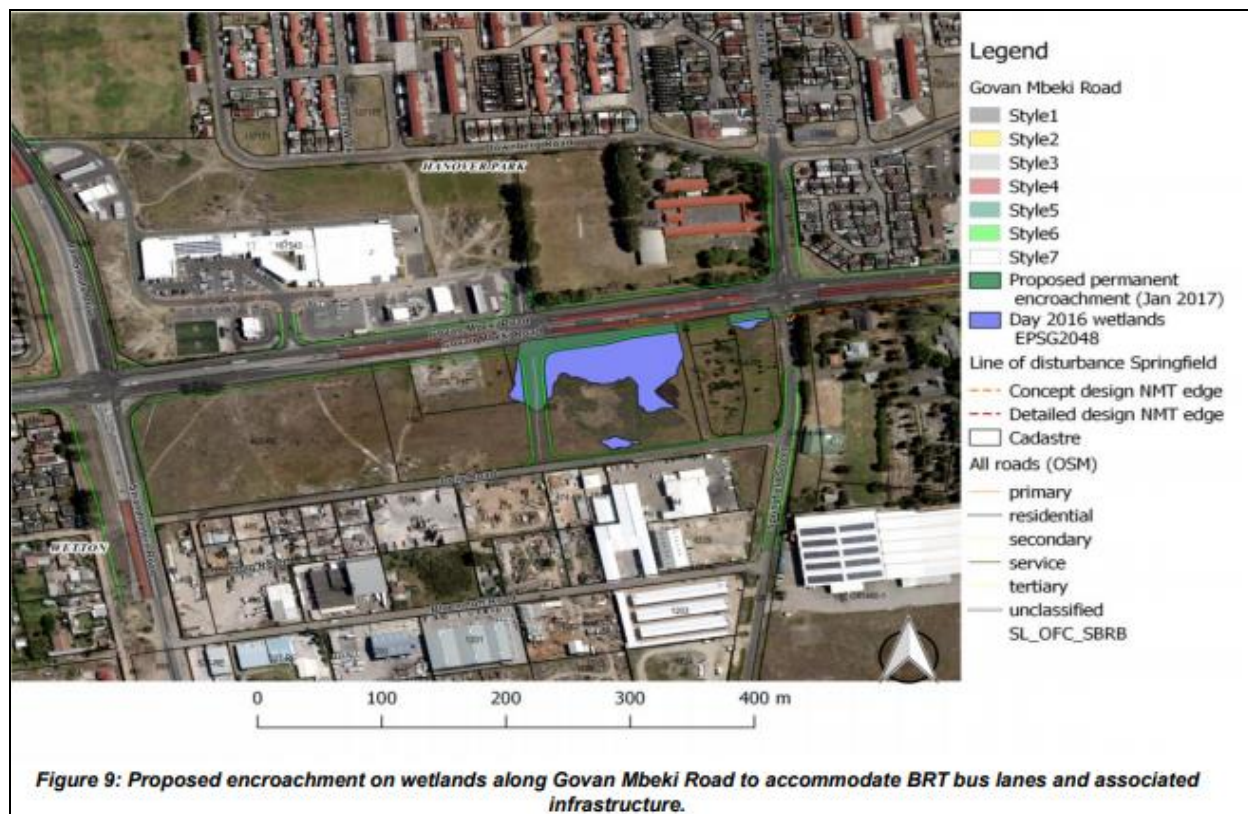


Figure 1 Proposed Wetland Encroachment for the Western Component (source: Final Basic Assessment Report, Environmental Partnership, 2017)

- f) MP also committed to engaging both the botanist and freshwater ecologist on whether any offsets would be required adding that she would also ask them to include a motivation either way in their respective specialist reports.
- g) DG highlighted that, should an offset be considered, it would need to be carried out to the benefit of the affected catchment or vegetation type.
- h) RS confirmed that, should an offset be recommended, the relevant City of Cape Town departments would engage one another on the appropriate mechanism. MP noted that on the IRT Depot Basic Assessment process, the roads and environmental branches drafted and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which allowed for the transfer of the offset funds to the Environment and Heritage Management branch. RS stated that he would keep this in mind.

4.5.3. The Ecological Importance of the Edith Stephens Wetland Park

- a) DG informed attendees that a new species of "Dainty Frog" or "Flat Caco" had recently been described and that there is a large population residing in the Edith Stephens Wetland Park. He explained that the species in question has been recently reclassified and is the *cacosternum platys* and that it has a very narrow distribution and is only found in the lowlands of the southern Cape Peninsula.
- b) When AP asked about the importance of the *cacosternum platys* to the functioning of the ecosystem, DG responded by saying that it is important to consider how rare the frog is and what the implications of that are on how the Edith Stephens Wetland Park is viewed and treated. He concluded that the Edith Stephens Wetland Park must be unique and significant, adding that the ecological processes therein are important. He emphasised that this fact reiterates the importance of protecting the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.
- c) MP said that she would provide the freshwater ecologist with the information on the *cacosternum platys* for inclusion in the specialist report as well as the Basic Assessment Report.
- d) DG added that the Edith Stephens Wetland Park also houses a breeding population of the endangered Western Leopard Toad.
- e) MP queried whether the presence of the *cacosternum platys* and Western Leopard Toad would necessitate a faunal impact assessment, DG advised that this would not be necessary, however the information should be used to reinforce the importance of the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.

4.5.4. Considering Maintenance Activities for the Lotus Canal along the northern side of Govan Mbeki Road

- a) WW indicated that the proposal may affect the execution of regular maintenance along the Lotus Canal by potentially inhibiting access and/or parking for the machinery used to carry out the works. He indicated that, currently, an excavator is used to clear the section between Heinz Road and Vygekraal Road and that a bulldozer is used to clean the section between Vygekraal Road and Duinefontein Road.
- b) EM emphasised that the proposed road widening provides for the largest footprint, but that the width could be reduced in certain instances where interference with infrastructure on the ground could occur. He confirmed that this would be considered during the detail design phase.
- c) MP assured WW that she would include in the Basic Assessment Report a recommendation that, during the detail design phase, the team are to liaise closely with the City of Cape Town Asset Management department in this regard.

4.5.5. Stormwater Management

- a) RS asked whether a Stormwater Management Plan has been compiled and MP responded in the affirmative, indicating that it would be appended to the Basic Assessment Report for comment.
- b) EM confirmed that the Stormwater Management Plan would be updated to reflect the separation of the catchment of the road and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park as well as ensuring that surface flow from the road enters the Lotus Canal. He added that it would also be updated to clarify the flow of water along the route, particularly in the areas adjacent to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park as well as recommendations from the freshwater ecologist and botanist.
- c) MP agreed that the updated Stormwater Management Plan would be circulated to the freshwater ecologist to ensure that she is satisfied with the mitigation measures at the Edith Stephens Wetland Park and then a copy would be provided to RS for comment.

4.6. Questions and Answers

The following questions and their respective responses were tabled at the meeting.

No.	Question	Answer
1	Are there any potential issues related to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park or the pavement trees?	The key aspect to the protection of the Edith Stephens Wetland Park would be to limit edge effects by ensuring that stormwater and sub-surface drainage from the road is directed away from the Edith Stephens Wetland Park. The removal of the pavement trees would have to be raised with City Parks, however it is agreed that the trees themselves offer little ecological value.
2	Are there any other stakeholders within the City of Cape Town who should be contacted?	No, Mr. Rashaad Samaai would be the key contact person responsible for disseminating any future information to the correct parties within the City of Cape Town for comment.

4.7. Other

- a) No other issues were raised at the meeting.

4.8. Close

- a) MP thanked all attendees for their time and input and closed the meeting at 11h30.

5. ACTIONS

A number of actions arose from the meeting. The details thereof are tabled overleaf.

No.	Action	Details	Responsible Party
1	Add to the Basic Assessment Report as conditions of authorisation	During the detail design phase, the Applicant and design team are to liaise closely with the City of Cape Town Asset Management Department (currently Mr. Walter Williams is the appropriate contact person) to ensure that the development allows maintenance machinery such as excavators and bulldozers sufficient access to the Lotus Canal for cleaning operations. It is important that maintenance activities of the Lotus Canal are not impeded.	MP
2		During the detail design phase, the Applicant and design team are to liaise closely with the City of Cape Town Biodiversity branch (currently Mr. Dalton Gibbs is the appropriate contact person), the Edith Stephens Wetland Park management, and the City of Cape Town Environment and Heritage Management branch (currently Mr. Rashaad Samaai is the appropriate contact) with regard to the interface between the development and the Edith Stephens Wetland Park. It is important that stormwater and edge effects be considered as well as means of preventing unauthorised (accidental or otherwise) access into the area. The prevention of windblown litter into the Edith Stephens Wetland Park should also be considered.	MP
3	Engage the botanist on:	The significance of the impact of the loss of the vegetated buffer adjacent to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park and whether it would change with the construction of a dike or other system which completely separates surface-level and subterranean water flow into the Edith Stephens Wetland Park from the road.	MP
4		Whether or not a biodiversity offset is recommended and a supporting motivation is to be provided in the specialist report.	MP
5	Engage the freshwater ecologist on:	Whether or not a wetland offset is recommended and a supporting motivation is to be provided in the specialist report.	MP
6		Including mention of the recently identified "Flat Caco" or "Dainty Frog", <i>cacosternum platys</i> , in the specialist report.	MP
7	Review the offset recommendation for the western component to determine whether it is related to the ecological value of any wetlands which would require infilling.		MP
8	Update Stormwater Management Plan to include:	Information on how the subterranean and surface hydrology will be separated from the Edith Stephens Wetland Park (e.g. with the construction of a dike). It is important to separate nutrient transfer from the road to the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.	EM
9		Catchment from the road is to be conveyed to	EM

	the Lotus Canal.	
10	Information on the where the water will flow along the route (with particular attention to be paid to avoiding stormwater flow into the Edith Stephens Wetland Park).	EM
11	Any additional recommendations from the updated specialist studies as discussed above.	EM
12	A review of the updated stormwater report is to be undertaken by the freshwater ecologist in order to confirm that she is comfortable with the proposal as it relates to the local freshwater system, particularly the Edith Stephens Wetland Park.	BlueScience -MP to send the report to them
13	The Stormwater Management Plan will then also be circulated to the City Environment and Heritage Management branch.	EM/ MP