

T-N003-06 Ashburton - Comment and Response Report

N3 ASHBURTON - INITIAL PPP (25 September 2024 - 25 October 2024)				
Thu 2024/10/24	<p>I understand that the initial notification is the start of an assessment process. Nevertheless, the purpose of my email is to lodge an objection to the proposed project.</p> <p>Ashburton has long been an area with a mix of farming and residential use. Residential properties are typically larger than elsewhere in Pietermaritzburg and many people have moved to Ashburton because they sought the benefits of that particular mix. I have been a resident since 1991.</p> <p>Ashburton offered a relatively low density, quieter environment with a rural atmosphere that varied somewhat in intensity depending on location within the area. Ashburton shifted increasingly towards a residential character as more people moved in, taking advantage of the particular quality of life it offered. It is now strongly residential, although it still retains many elements of the character that initially made it attractive. The lack of infrastructural development, notably with regard to sewerage, has ensured that this is so. Some developments in Ashburton that run counter to its rural-flavoured residential character have slipped by formal planning processes and broken regulations.</p> <p>The proposed project stands in stark opposition to the residential reality of Ashburton as well as the particular, special character of that reality. The EV recharging aspect of the project seems so out of step with the South African EV reality that it reduces the project to simply a truck park. But even if the EV aspect becomes viable, a truck park is an incompatible development for a residential area, both socially and environmentally. It seems even incompatible with this part of the N3 as there will be no easy run off, run on ramps. Rather the Ashburton interchange will remain complex after completion of the current upgrade. The steep slopes either</p>	G Whitelaw	<p>Noted.</p> <p>While Ashburton has traditionally had a rural and residential character, it is important to recognize that the area is evolving in response to broader regional and national trends, particularly in terms of sustainability and infrastructure development. The proposed solar PV plant aligns with the global push for renewable energy sources, which is a priority in addressing climate change and South Africa's energy needs. The project has been designed to minimise environmental and visual impacts, and will undergo comprehensive specialist studies, including visual, socio-economic, traffic, and biodiversity assessments. These studies will inform design refinements to ensure the development integrates sensitively into the area while meeting renewable energy and transport infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Concerns regarding the feasibility of the EV component are acknowledged. The project aligns with the Department of Transport's Green Transport Strategy (2018–2050) and national commitments to reduce carbon emissions. The charging infrastructure will future proof the N3 freight corridor and support the gradual transition to electric freight and passenger vehicles, ensuring that the facility is both relevant and strategically placed.</p> <p>The proposed development has been designed with accessibility and traffic management in mind. The current upgrade to the interchange is expected to improve traffic flow,</p>	EnviroAfrica

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	side of the interchange will continue to pose challenge to exiting and returning heavy vehicles.		including for vehicles entering and exiting the site. Furthermore, comprehensive traffic studies will be conducted to ensure that the development will not cause undue strain on the existing infrastructure. Accessibility and traffic safety at the Ashburton interchange are being addressed through a Traffic Impact Assessment. The current N3 upgrades will improve capacity, and any additional road upgrades required for the safe movement of trucks and vehicles into and out of the site will be recommended in the assessment and implemented accordingly.	
Wed 2024/10/23	We live within 100 meters of the above proposed development and object to it. This is an agricultural and equestrian area and we do not want a development of this kind there. There is a facility on the Old Main Road which addresses these requirements already.	M Willis	<p>The objection is noted. Please note that this is only the initial notification and the start of the assessment process. Initial assessments and planning, including compilation of the site development layouts, are still being conducted. The area's current agricultural and equestrian land uses are acknowledged. Specialist studies, including agricultural compliance and visual impact assessments, are underway to determine the compatibility of the development. You have been registered as an Interested and Affected Party and will be kept informed throughout the process.</p> <p>The comment regarding an existing facility on the Old Main Road is noted. Each proposed Zero Carbon Charge (ZCC) facility is strategically located to serve specific logistics and transport needs along the N3 corridor. While there may be other fuel or truck stop facilities in the broader area, the Ashburton site has been identified for its proximity to the upgraded N3 interchange, its solar resource potential, and its ability to provide grid-independent, renewable charging for electric freight vehicles. This facility is intended to complement, rather than duplicate, existing services and will be assessed to ensure that it provides added value and regional coverage for long-haul transport without unnecessary duplication.</p>	EnviroAfrica
Sun 2024/10/20	I would like to state that I am very strongly opposed against this proposed plant being approved at all.	M Ellis	Noted.	EnviroAfrica

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	<p>We as residents and home owners are privileged to be able to enjoy the natural surroundings in fauna and flora.</p> <p>The effect of the proposed plant actually being approved & developed would negatively impact on what we know and love to be life in Ashburton beyond repair.</p> <p>This development would be directly responsible for increase in vehicular and civilian traffic, consequently the very likely accompanying increase in crime and a resultant security risk!</p> <p>Besides ourselves and our homes and lives, the consequences of all the aforementioned would also damage the harmony of the resident wild animals and veld. This community actively makes ongoing effort to support and nurture the wildlife and habitat. We respect our environment and we love the animals and the bush.</p>		<p>Noted.</p> <p>The concern is acknowledged. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is specifically designed to identify and evaluate potential negative impacts on the environment, community character, and quality of life. Specialist studies—including visual, socio-economic, biodiversity, and traffic assessments—are being undertaken to measure the scale of these impacts and recommend mitigation measures. The development layout will be refined to avoid or minimise sensitive areas, and mitigation will be implemented to protect the sense of place and rural character of Ashburton as far as possible.</p> <p>The concern regarding traffic, safety, and crime risk is noted. A Traffic Impact Assessment is being undertaken to assess anticipated changes in vehicle movements and to recommend road safety improvements where required. In addition, the Socio-economic Impact Assessment will consider potential security risks and propose mitigation measures. Typical mitigation includes controlled access, perimeter fencing, lighting designed to reduce security risks without causing light pollution, and on-site security staff. These measures aim to ensure that the facility operates safely, minimises risks to nearby communities, and does not contribute to an increase in crime in the area.</p> <p>The concern regarding wildlife and natural habitat is acknowledged. A Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment, Avifaunal Assessment, and Freshwater Assessment are being undertaken as part of the EIA process. These studies will identify sensitive habitats, species of conservation concern, and ecological corridors on and around the site. The development layout will be refined to avoid critical areas, with ecological buffers implemented where necessary. In addition, rehabilitation and conservation measures will be included to protect and</p>	
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	<p>It is a most disturbing & rather unsettling thought to begin to consider the inception of construction and the absolute congestion, destruction & pollution that will accompany this process. Then the actual daily operations of the plant once it is running.</p> <p>It would make any proud South African cry.</p> <p>So many trucks, vehicles, strangers, traffic, pollution... this simply cannot have a positive outcome and it is terrifying and actually disgusting that such a proposal is even drafted for what is a conservation area!</p>		<p>support biodiversity in line with the community's commitment to the natural environment.</p> <p>The concerns regarding construction impacts, congestion, and potential pollution are acknowledged. The EIA process includes specialist studies on traffic, air quality, noise, and socio-economic aspects, all of which will assess both construction- and operation-phase impacts. A detailed Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) will be developed to ensure that construction activities are carefully managed, with measures such as dust suppression, erosion control, waste management, traffic control, and restricted working hours. During operations, the solar PV facility is considered a low-impact technology, generating no emissions, noise, or waste under normal operation. The EMPr will also guide operational management to ensure that impacts remain minimal and that the facility integrates with the surrounding environment responsibly.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>The objection is acknowledged. The site is not located within a formally designated conservation area, but it is recognised that it lies in proximity to sensitive habitats, including the Mpushini Protected Environment. These sensitivities are being fully assessed through biodiversity, avifaunal, and freshwater specialist studies, as well as a Visual Impact Assessment. The development layout will be refined to avoid ecologically sensitive areas and to respect regulatory buffer zones around watercourses and conservation areas. In addition, traffic, noise, and pollution impacts will be addressed through specialist studies and managed under a legally binding Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).</p>	
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	<p>Even if the development site falls just outside the boundary of the conservation area, the proximity and vehicle access it entails WILL have impacts.</p> <p>A firm no thank you from me.</p>		<p>The concern regarding proximity to conservation areas is acknowledged. The site is located near the Mpushini Protected Environment, which increases the sensitivity of the proposed development. A Visual Impact Assessment, Biodiversity Assessment, and Freshwater Assessment are being undertaken to specifically address potential edge effects and indirect impacts on the protected environment. The development layout will include buffer zones, indigenous vegetation screening, and restrictions on vehicle access routes to reduce disturbance to surrounding natural areas. Traffic management measures will also be implemented to minimise noise, dust, and disturbance to adjacent conservation areas. These mitigation measures will be detailed in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) to ensure long-term protection of nearby conservation resources.</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
<p>Thu 2024/10/17</p>	<p>TN003-06</p> <p>I refer to the above application and confirm that I act for Kondeni Fuels, owner of a truck stop located at Mkondeni as an interested and affected party in response to the NEMA and NWA public notice issued in this matter. My client's interest in this matter is that it too services the long distance trucking industry.</p> <p>We would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require and an interested and affected party that any and all documentation and reports be submitted to all affected and interested parties for review. 2. Request a public meeting to be held in order to engage with all interested and affected parties in which any concerns can be raised, and questions may be answered. 3. Request that a solution be proposed to any impacts the planning, construction and operation of the proposed development will have on traffic. 	M Moola	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration as an Interested and Affected Party is confirmed. 2. Holding a public meeting in subsequent phases of the EIA process will be considered moving forward. 3. A Traffic Impact Assessment is being conducted, and the findings will be included in the Scoping and/or Environmental Impact Assessment Reports. 	EnviroAfrica

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	<p>4. Request that the social and economic impact on residents and businesses in the area be addressed in a socio-economic impact assessment.</p> <p>5. Request that the civil aviation authority be contracted to determine the need for an obstacle assessment and glint and glare assessment, given that the solar plant is so close the highway and potentially close to any airstrips.</p> <p>6. Question what will happen should electric trucks and vehicles not take off as planned?</p> <p>Please ensure you accommodate the public meeting to hear all the interested and affected parties' concerns.</p>		<p>4. A Socio-economic Impact Assessment is being conducted, and the findings will be included in the Scoping and/or Environmental Impact Assessment Reports.</p> <p>5. The Civil Aviation Authority has been consulted and confirmed the need for a formal obstacle assessment. This will be addressed in subsequent phases of the EIA process moving forward.</p> <p>6. The "no-go" alternative will also be assessed as part of the EIA process, examining the potential outcomes if the proposed development does not proceed, i.e. maintaining the status quo.</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
Civil Aviation				
Mo 2024/10/07	<p>The proposed establishment of a solar photovoltaic renewable energy generation plant and electric truck charging facility needs a formal obstacle assessment to determine whether it poses a threat to the safety of nearby flights.</p> <p>Kindly lodge a formal obstacle assessment with Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS) as published on the SACAA website: www.caa.co.za/industryinformation/obstacles/. The list and contact details of the approved obstacles assessment services providers can be obtained from the CAA website: www.caa.co.za. You also advice to inform Pietermaritzburg Airport for their comments and inputs.</p>	N Mashiloane SACAA - Aviation Environmental Compliance Department	<p>The requirement for a formal obstacle assessment is confirmed. EnviroAfrica has initiated the process with Air Traffic and Navigation Services (ATNS), and Pietermaritzburg Airport has been formally notified for input on <u>Tuesday, October 8, 2024</u>. The results of the assessment will be included in the EIA phase to ensure aviation safety is fully addressed.</p>	EnviroAfrica