

PROPOSED POTSDAM UNIT V HUMAN SETTLEMENT

Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Background Information Document (BID)

INTRODUCTION

Buffalo City Municipality (BCM) is proposing to establish a less formal human settlement called Potsdam Unit V (Southern Portion) in East London. ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd has been appointed by BCM as independent environmental practitioners to undertake an application for environmental authorisation in the form of a scoping and EIA for the proposed development. The EIA will conform to the July 2006 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations as promulgated in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

This document constitutes the Background Information Document (BID) and is intended to provide background information on the development proposal and the full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process to be followed for environmental authorisation.

PROJECT LOCATION

The area known as Potsdam Unit V is located to the west of Mdantsane NU15 and Fort Jackson Industrial area and south of the N2 National Road joining East London to King Williamstown. Potsdam Unit V is located on erven 2569, 2876, 3183, 3481, 3814, 4145, 4473, and 4723. Access to the site is on the existing tarred road joining Potsdam South to the Mdantsane NU15. The proposed development is surrounded by a residential development on the northern side and an industrial development to the east. To the south and west, the land is vacant, however, the urban edge is located along the edge of the existing townships. See Locality Map below.

PROJECT DETAILS

BCM is both the landowner of the proposed site and the proponent and applicant for environmental authorisation. The total area of the proposed site is approximately 168.77 Ha. The land is currently undeveloped and zoned as “undetermined” but earmarked for residential township establishment.

The proposed activity is the establishment of a less formal human settlement called Potsdam Unit V involving the construction of low-cost housing as well as the associated infrastructure, bulk services, and social and economic facilities. As the area is close to existing infrastructure it should be easily integrated into the bulk infrastructure. With regard to services, running water will be supplied, either to each stand or to RDP standards every 200 meters. It is expected that electricity will be supplied from the existing supply.

The area known as Potsdam Unit V was originally planned in 1994 and was approved in terms of the Ciskei Ordinance 15 of 1997. BCM is now proposing the amendment to the existing approved plans of Potsdam Unit V, because presently the existing layout plans are uneconomical in terms of service provision. Therefore BCM, in line with the SDF, has identified Potsdam Unit V as an area that can be used for a higher density settlement. The densification would not only provide much needed housing, but also enable the area to be serviced more economically.

EIA REQUIREMENTS

The National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) Section 24(5) stipulates that “listed activities” require environmental authorization by way of an Environmental Impact Assessment. This project involves the following listed activities:

Government Notice No. R. 386 lists the following as requiring a Basic Assessment:

Listed Activity No. 1 (k) – The construction of facilities or infrastructure, including associated structures or infrastructure, for the bulk transportation of sewage and water, including storm water, in pipelines with:

- (i) an internal diameter of 0.36 metres or more;
- (ii) a peak throughput of 120 litres per second or more.

Project Activity – The site will generate increased amounts of storm water that will need to be attenuated on site.

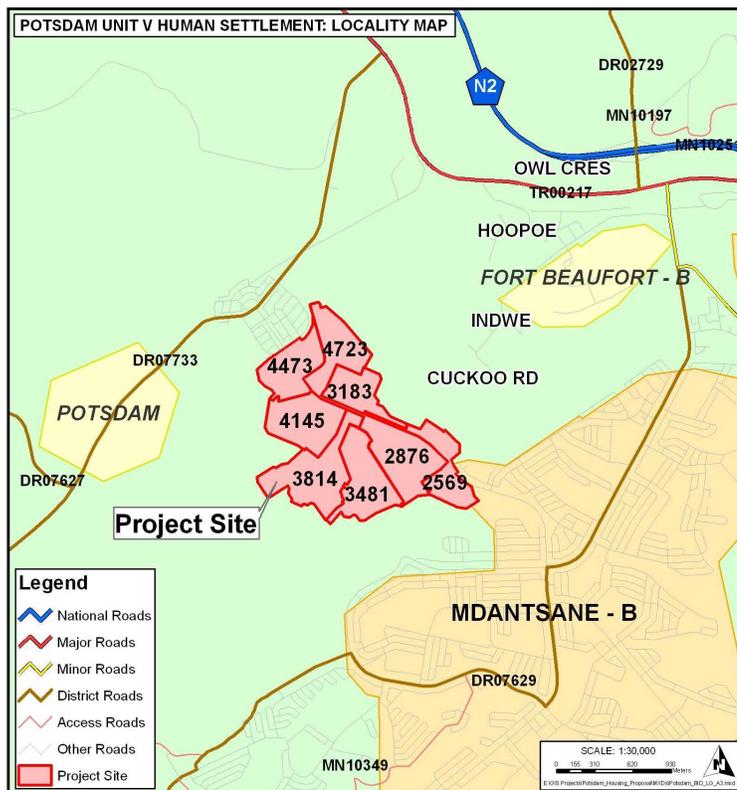
Listed Activity No. 15 – The construction of a road that is wider than 4 metres or that has a reserve wider than 6 metres, excluding roads that fall within the ambit of another listed activity or which are access roads of less than 30 metres long.

Project Activity – The construction of internal access roads.

Government Notice No. R. 387 lists the following as requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment:

Activity No. 2 – Any development activity, including associated structures and infrastructure, where the total area of the developed area is, or is intended to be, 20 hectares or more.

Given the above listed activities, a full EIA process will be followed.



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PHASES IN THE EIA

Application Phase: An application for authorisation has been submitted to the relevant authority, the Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (DEDEA), East London Office.

Scoping Phase: Once the application has been accepted, the project will enter the Scoping Phase. This phase will include a Public Participation Process (PPP). The Scoping Phase aims to achieve the following:

- To record the issues, concerns and objections of the public;
- To identify key issues and potential impacts associated with the project; and
- To identify different alternatives associated with the project.

EIA Phase: Once the Scoping Report is approved the project will proceed into the detailed EIA Phase. This will involve a detailed impact assessment. An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) will be prepared and will focus on mitigating the environmental impacts identified in the Scoping Phase.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Crucial to the EIA process is input from Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs). Hence the public are encouraged to register as I&APs for this project and to submit their comments in writing to Mrs Lara Giese of ARCUS GIBB (see details below) regarding the proposed project so that a paper trail can be maintained throughout the EIA process. Registered I&APs will be kept informed of project progress throughout the EIA process.

The public will also be given the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Scoping Report and the Draft Environmental Impact Report. All comments raised by I&APs will be incorporated into the final reports and submitted to (DEDEA) to enable them to make an informed decision with regard to the development proposal.

Once a Record of Decision (RoD) is received, it will be distributed to registered I&APs who may appeal to the Minister of Environmental Affairs in opposition to the decision.

To register as an I&AP, kindly contact:

Mrs Lara Giese
 ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd.
 P.O. Box 19844
 Tecoma
 East London
 5241
 Tel: (0)43 - 7063605
 Fax: (0)43 - 7063647 or 7210141
 Email: lgiese@gibb.co.za



KEY ISSUES

Key environmental issues that have emerged to date include:

Capacity of municipal services: With the recent development boom in the Buffalo City Municipality, the municipal services are under stress. The development must therefore not compromise the capacity of such services.

Compliance to relevant environmental policy and development guidelines: The development must conform to recent environmental policy such as the BCM Environmental Management Plan, BCM Spatial Development Framework, etc.

PROJECT TEAM

INVOLVEMENT	ORGANISATION
<i>Proponent</i>	BCM (Buffalo City Municipality)
<i>Landowner</i>	BCM (Buffalo City Municipality)
<i>Environmental Practitioners</i>	ARCUS GIBB (Pty) Ltd.