

## Theo Wicks

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**From:** Theo Wicks  
**Sent:** 12 November 2020 07:12 PM  
**Subject:** SANRAL | N2 Section 18 Community Access Road Upgrades | Application for Environmental Authorisation  
**Attachments:** 2020-08-11\_N2 Section 18 Community Access Roads-Comp-min.pdf

Dear Interested and Affected Party

### **PROPOSED N2 SECTION 18 FROM VIEDGESVILLE (KM 65.6) TO MTHATHA (KM 85.0) COMMUNITY ACCESS ROAD UPGRADES**

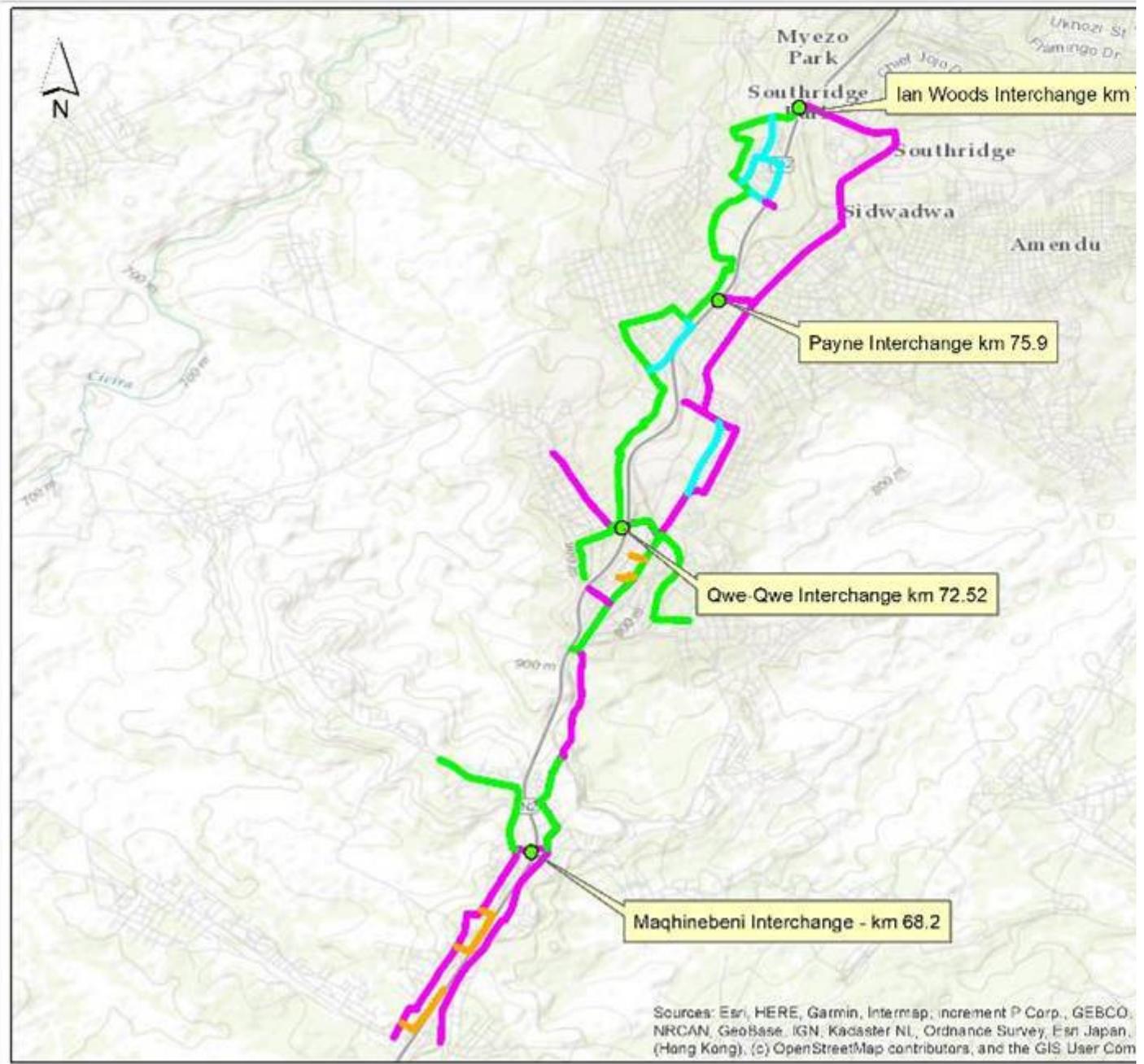
In June 2020, SANRAL was granted an Environmental Authorisation by DEFF for the upgrade to the N2 Section 18 between Mthatha and Viedgesville. The primary objectives of the upgrade are to improve road safety standards along the alignment and to improve mobility and traffic efficiency.

Currently, the N2 Section 18 has several informal community access roads joining the national route which pose a road safety risk to users departing the N2 or joining with it (See Figure 1-2 which illustrates an example of informal access to be diverted). As part of the upgrade to the N2 Section 18 upgrade, these accesses will be redirected to formalized intersections at Maqhinebeni, Qwe-Qwe, Payne and at Ian Woods Drive (See Figure 1-1).

The redirection of traffic away from accessing the N2 will result in increased traffic volumes along the receiving routes. To ensure the functionality and longevity of these routes, SANRAL has proposed:

- Upgrading the existing road geometry to Class 4 and Class 5 profiles. The road alignments targeted for upgrade vary in current condition from formal accesses to vehicle tracks.
- Extending road alignment ensuring connectivity between areas; and
- Upgrading and installation of infrastructure to cross watercourses.

SLR Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd (SLR) was appointed by Gibb (Pty) (Ltd), on behalf of SANRAL, as the environmental services provider. As part of the appointed services, SLR is responsible for compiling an Application for Environmental Authorisation on SANRALs behalf and undertaking the associated Basic Assessment process.



## BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Steps undertaken to date during the Basic Assessment process are outlined below.

- An interested and affected party (I&AP) database has been compiled using information obtained during a social scan of the project area, the Properties Report compiled by Gibb, responses to the advertisements, site notices and notification letters;
- Written notification, including a copy of the BAR executive summary, was circulated to I&APs informing of them of the application for environmental authorisation and BA process;
- Press advertisements were placed in English and Xhosa in a locally distributed newspaper. Site notices were placed at conspicuous locations along the various alignments;
- An application form was submitted to DEFF on 29 October 2020;
- Specialist input was provided on the likely impact of the proposed project on the biophysical, socio-economic and cultural aspects of the environment; and
- Draft BAR has been made available to I&APs for a 30-day comment period.

The following steps will be undertaken in the remainder of the BA process:

- All comments received during the review period will be included in the BAR submitted to DEFF for consideration and decision-making; and

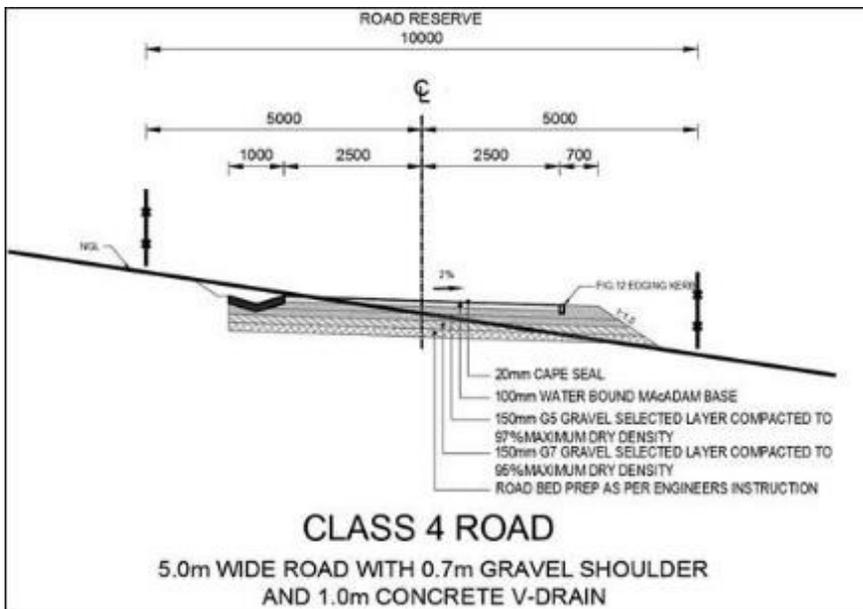
- After DEFF has reached a decision, all I&APs on the project database will be notified of the outcome of the application and the reasons for the decision and the statutory appeal period.

**OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT**

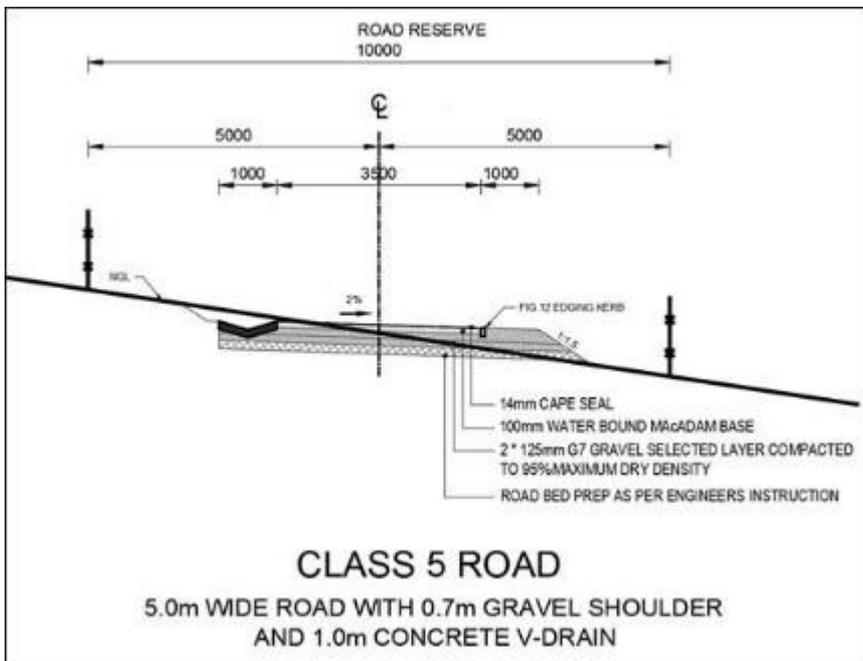
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Currently, the N2 Section 18 has several informal community access roads joining the national route which pose a road safety risk to users departing or joining the N2. As part of the upgrade to the N2 Section 18 upgrade, these accesses will be redirected to formalized intersections at Maqhinebeni, Qwe-Qwe, Payne and at Ian Woods Drive (See Figure 0-1).

To ensure that these intersections function efficiently, it is SANRALs proposal to upgrade the neighbouring community access roads alongside the N2 Section 18. The upgrades consist of in-situ upgrades to the road pavements and drainage to a Class 4 and Class 5 design standard and to realign certain sections to maintain network connectivity.



TYPICAL CROSS SECTION - CLASS 4 ROAD



TYPICAL CROSS SECTION - CLASS 5 ROAD

## SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Potential impacts associated with the project have been identified by the BA project team with input from specialists and I&APs. The range of environmental issues considered in the BA was given specific context and focus through consultation with authorities and I&APs. All identified impacts are considered in a cumulative manner such that the impacts of the current baseline conditions on and surrounding the site and those potentially associated with the project are discussed and assessed together.

A summary of the potential impacts in the unmitigated and mitigated scenarios is provided in the table below.

Potential impact	Significance of impacts	
	Without mitigation	With mitigation
Loss of soil resources through physical disturbance	L	VL
Loss of agricultural soil resources through contamination	M	VL
Loss of terrestrial habitat and biodiversity through physical disturbance	L	VL
Disturbances of aquatic habitat and related biodiversity	L	Insignificant
Increase in ambient air concentrations	L	VL
Increase in disturbing noise levels affecting potential human receptors	M	L
Disruption in traffic movements	M	L
Economic impact	H+	NA
Social benefits associated with improved infrastructure	VH+	NA
Disturbance of ground resulting in damage to heritage resources	Insignificant	Insignificant
Disturbance of ground resulting in damage to Paleontological Resources	L	L

VH – Very High; H – High; M- Medium; L – Low; VL – Very Low; + denotes a positive impact;

The mitigated assessment assumes that technical design controls, as included in the project scope, together with mitigation measures included in the environmental management programme (EMPr) would be included in the detailed design and implemented when the construction commences. As a result, the majority of potential biophysical impacts associated with the proposed upgrade to the N2 Section 18 would be short term and limited either to the site or neighbouring land. These include impacts on soils, terrestrial habitats and biodiversity, drainage patterns and surface water quality. The potential impacts on biophysical aspects are considered to be of **LOW** or **VERY LOW** significance with mitigation.

Proceeding with the project attracts potential direct and indirect positive economic benefits and potential negative environmental and social impacts of lower significance (dust and noise).

The No-go alternative implies that the status quo will be retained implying that the potential negative risks will not occur at the expense of not improving road safety and capacity and the associated revenues generated by construction.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is the opinion of SLR that in terms the key principles of sustainability, including ecological integrity, economic efficiency, and equity and social justice that there is no reason why the proposed project, with implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, should not receive a favourable decision. The management and mitigation measures recommended for the proposed project are detailed in the Environmental Management Programmes for implementation during construction.

## OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

This Basic Assessment Report has been distributed for a 30-day comment period from 12 November to 12 December 2020 in order to provide I&APs with an opportunity to comment on any aspect of the proposed project and the findings of the BA process to date. All identified I&APs were notified of the opportunity to comment on the BAR and provided with a copy of the Executive Summary of this BAR. The notice advised of the review period and confirmed

this BAR's availability for download on the SLR website (at <https://slrconsulting.com/za/slr-documents/xxx>). Copies of the Basic Assessment are available on request, preferably via electronic mediums.

Any comments should be forwarded to SLR at the address, telephone/fax numbers or e-mail address shown below. For comments to be included in the updated BAR, comments should reach SLR by **no later than 12 December 2020**.

**SLR Consulting (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd**

Attention: Theo Wicks

P.O. Box 1596, Cramerview, 2060 (if using post please call SLR to notify us of your submission)

Tel: (011) 467 09 45

Fax: (011) 467 0978

E-mail: [twicks@slrconsulting.com](mailto:twicks@slrconsulting.com)

Kind Regards

Theo



## Theo Wicks

Environmental Assessment Practitioner

-  +27 33 343 5826
-  +27 82 337 8862
-  [twicks@slrconsulting.com](mailto:twicks@slrconsulting.com)

SLR Consulting (Africa) (Pty) Ltd  
SLR Consulting (Durban office)  
68 on Main  
Old Main Road  
Kloof  
Durban, 3640



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