Peninsula Expressway
Background Document

INTRODUCTION

The Cape Metropolitan Area experiences serious traffic congestion problems in certain areas, particularly on major routes within a 10-15km radius of the CBD of Cape Town. Currently, the main routes servicing the Cape Metropolitan Area are the N1, N2 and N7 National Roads together with heavily utilized lower order arterial roads. This problem has led to the proposal for the R300 Ring Road, which will be declared as a National Road, the N21.

The concept of constructing a portion of the future R300 as part of a private development was first considered by Kayad Consulting Engineers on behalf of the parties involved in 1995. At that time, there was no suitable legislation to enable this to be implemented thus it was not pursued. In April 1996, the then Department of Transport passed a new Act, which made provision for the construction and tolling of Privatized National Roads. This allowed the R300 Ring Road Project to be further expanded and it has subsequently been developed over the past 4 years into the current format.

During October 1997, the South African Roads Board (of the Department of Transport) issued the first guidelines for the submission of Unsolicited Proposals for Road Transport Infrastructure Development. These guidelines have been modified and amended into the current version, which was finalized in May 1999. This Project has been submitted to the South African Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), in terms of these guidelines.

The R300 Ring Road is intended as a toll road between Muizenberg and Melkbosstrand. The ultimate intention is to provide an Outer Ring Road, which is accessible from as many areas as possible within the Cape Town urban area. This will result in the unloading of heavily congested arterial routes in the urban area together with related savings in time and cost for motorists. It is the developers' intention that the toll fees generated should be cost effective to all sectors of the population, while ensuring that the maintenance and service of the road are of a high standard in the future.

Chand/Ecosense JV have been appointed to carry out the Environmental Impact Assessment for this proposal.

This document aims to provide Background Information on the project, describe the study process and enable Interested and Affected parties to comment on the project.

REASON FOR TOLL ROADS

Due to the scarcity of funding for Road Transport Infrastructure, the relevant authorities have been forced to spend all available revenue on rehabilitation and maintenance of existing roads. This has resulted in a lack of funds for the construction of new roads. It was thus decided by the Department of Transport (now SA National Roads Agency Limited) to create opportunities for the Private Sector to provide new Roads. These would be funded by Private Developers who would recover their costs by Tolling of the facility. This concept known as Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) is an internationally accepted means of providing large infrastructure, which the Public Sector is unable to fund.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Environment Conservation Act 73 of 1989 provides for the control of identified activities, which may have a detrimental effect on the environment. The act further prohibits such activities until written authorization is obtained from the Minister or their delegated authority. Such authorization, which may be granted subject to conditions, will only be considered once the Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

Activities that may be detrimental to the environment are listed in the Government Notice R1182 of the 5 September 1997. The construction of roads outside borders of town planning schemes is such a listed activity and consequently the current study will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations promulgated in terms of the Environment Conservation Act.

It should be noted that of the 3 phases under investigation (refer description of the Project), Phase 1, Phase 3 and portions of Phase 2 fall within a Town Planning Scheme. Thus, portions of Phase 2 are the only areas that require the formal EIA process. However in the spirit of the National Environmental Management Act (No 106 of 1998) and the interest of good planning this project is being viewed as a whole, and all phases will be investigated.

NECESSITY FOR ROAD

Traditionally the major routes merged to or radiated from the Cape Town CBD. This area forms the main business focal point for the whole South Western Cape, hence resulting in increasing flows of private and commercial vehicles.

The natural growth in the Cape, together with a high influx of people from outside the Western Cape, has resulted in the excessive congestion of traffic on the existing road network. The present problem of congestion and the absence of good quality cross access roads around the city has limited potential growth in many areas and restricted the available employment markets to people throughout the Peninsula. Of particular concern are the restrictive access routes from the South Peninsula to the rest of the Metropolitan area as well as to the airport and the hinterland.

The proposed Ring Road would be a high-speed free flow freeway, which would connect the freeways and major connecting roads between Muizenberg and Melkbosstrand. The existing R300, which would form part of the Ring Road, has already proved an essential link between Vanguard Drive, National Route 2 and National Route 1.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Ring Road has been based on the principal of utilizing the existing R300, between the N1 (Bellville) and the Vanguard Drive, and extending it north and south such that it intersects all the freeways and major arterial roads in the Metropolitan Area. The total length of the proposed Ring Road will be 67km.

Penway Consortium has prepared a detailed four-phased engineering proposal, which describes the route. Please refer to Figure 1 attached.

Phase 1 of the project is the northern link to Melkbosstrand which would commence on the N1 at the Stellenberg Interchange and extend north through Durbanville. This section of 7km was proclaimed as a Trunk Road in 1974 and 1988.

Phase 2 is the northern link to Melkbosstrand from the boundary of Durbanville where the road will intersect Adderley Road (DIV 1102) 500 metres from the Eskom power lines and proceeds west. The road is to be located on the southern side of the Kuiperskraal and Welgegund Farms, through the Welgenoegd and Olifantskop Farms before reaching the N7at Morning Star. The last section between the N7 and the West Coast Road (TR27) is located mostly along the existing link road (MR43). It ends at the intersection of the West Coast and Blaauwberg Roads.

The southern extension, Phase 3, commences at the intersection of the R300 and Vanguard Drive. It crosses Vanguard Drive and is aligned parallel with it until almost opposite Wespoort Road. At this point it turns towards the west to follow the northern boundary of the Strandfontein residential area up to Strandfontein Road. From the Strandfontein Road to Capricorn the freeway would lie on the land located between Zeekoevlei and the Sewage Treatment Works, passing Pelican Park. The remainder of the road between Capricorn and the Main Road/Steenberg Road intersection is located within a previously expropriated freeway reserve. The section of Steenberg Road between the Main Road/Steenberg Road intersection and the Simon van der Stel Freeway (M3) would be upgraded. The interchange at Westlake would be upgraded to a full interchange.

Phase 4 is the upgrade and maintenance of the existing R300 road, which will link phases 1, 2 and 3 and form the ring road continuum. There will not be any major construction works along this route.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Phase 1

No alternative was considered for Phase 1 as it runs in the existing proclaimed and expropriated existing Trunk Road reserve.

Phase 2

The alignment of the road from the N1 to Melkbosstrand has been located in the most feasible position to suit the purpose of a Ring Road, accommodate the largest number of vehicles, and take into account the inputs from various stakeholders. Two other alternatives to the north were investigated which were:

South of the proposed route. This line would bisect the Tableview residential developments, which are extending rapidly north. This option would result in large-scale expropriations and high engineering costs to accommodate the mountain. Finally, this option would encroach on the proposed Blaauwberg Conservation Area.

The route to Atlantis was evaluated as the road authorities originally proposed it as a route many years ago. Two factors ruled it out, firstly that there is insufficient traffic from Atlantis and the northern areas to warrant the road and secondly that it was a much longer route hence increasing the cost of construction dramatically. It was considered that the West Coast and Malmesbury Roads could be readily upgraded to Freeway status if and when necessary in future providing adequate access from Atlantis to the Ring Road.

Phase 3

The alignment south of the existing R300 / Vanguard Drive intersection utilizes the Coastal Freeway designed approximately twenty years ago. Numerous properties have been purchased for the original road. Two alternatives were considered. These are:

- Diverting the section of freeway through the sewer ponds south to skirt the southern perimeter of the ponds. The two problems associated with this option would be the destruction of conservation worthy flora to the south and the cost associated with the length of the road.

- Replacing the route location with the R300 extension through the Philippi Farmlands. Three aspects arose which did not favor this as a toll road. These were

ISSUES UNDER INVESTIGATION

The biophysical assessment of this study will focus on

- Geology and Soils
- Topography
- Climate
- Flora & Fauna
    - The possibility of crossing Renosterveld or endemic Strandveld remnants
    - Identification of core botanical sites
    - Passing through proclaimed nature reserves
    - Ornithological disturbance with the road crossing the Rondevlei and Sandvlei areas
- Freshwater Systems
    - Impacts on the rivers and vleis

The social aspects under investigation include

- Identification of communities positively and negatively affected by the proposed road (by looking at the social profile of the affected communities).
- Safety and security issues
- Compatibility with surrounding land-uses (including the structure plans of the area).
- Economic Aspects - access to business areas, property values, toll fees etc.
- Traffic

THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The proposed Project has been developed by an Engineering Consortium led by Kayad Consulting Engineers, during the period since 1995 as described above. A total of approximately 120 meetings have been held with Central Government, Provincial Government, Local Government, Municipalities, Authorities and Private Individuals during this time. All known authorities, which may have an involvement in the Project, have been consulted on at least one occasion. As many as possible of the owners of property located along or adjacent to the road have been consulted in order to ascertain the best location for the new sections of road.

All of the above information has been used to arrive at the format and routing of the proposed Project, which forms the starting point for this EIA process.

As part of this environmental exercise, a public participation process is being undertaken. This includes the following:

- The construction cost would be almost 40% higher than the currently proposed route making it uneconomical as a toll facility.
- The freeway would traverse down the densely populated Prince George Drive area and would separate existing communities. The freeway could ultimately be enlarged to six lanes, which would not be compatible with a residential environment.
- The populations of Grassy Park, Retreat and Lavender Hill would likely resist the "tolling" of what are basically local arterial roads serving their communities

It is however beneficial to the local communities that the Philippi/R300 link be constructed the authorities as it would serve a very large, densely populated residential area. It would also provide an alternate route for the southern Ring Road extension to Westlake.

includes the following:

- Identifying Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and maintaining a database through the process
- Notification of the Scoping study in local media and recording responses.
- Compilation and distribution of a Background Information Document to approximately 60 key I&APs in each area or phase of the project and recording responses.
- One-on-one information sharing meetings with key groups (8 meetings), and recording minutes.
- Open Houses.
- Telephonic interaction with I&APs
- Compilation of a Draft Scoping document
- Review by the public and authorities
- Final Scoping Report