

NO.	ISSUE	COMMENT	RESPONSE
		This department however <u>supports</u> the proposed R44 improvements along the Steynsrust Road Intersection and requests input into the proposed landscape plans to mitigate the possible impacts along this route within the Somerset West area and considers the points above.	
1.7	<b>Environmental and Heritage Management: Heritage: Philip Smith</b>		
1.7.1	Potential heritage impacts	From a heritage perspective, the Environmental and Heritage Management Branch (Heritage Section) noted that the portion of this project which falls within the City of Cape Town boundary is centered on the Steynsrust Road intersection. As correctly identified in the HIA, there are no heritage resources in the Steynsrust intersection vicinity and as a result the impact of the newly proposed U-turn bridge is of very low significance and thus acceptable from a heritage point of view.	These comments regarding the potential heritage impacts in the vicinity of the Steynsrust Bridge Intersection have been noted.
1.8	<b>Environmental and Heritage Management: Environment: Lauren King</b>		
1.8.1	Environmental concerns	The Environmental and Heritage Branch (Environmental Section) has reviewed the Revised DBAR and Draft BAR Comments and Response Report 1 and is satisfied that all environmental concerns have been addressed in the Revised Draft BAR.	These comments confirming that environmental concerns have been addressed to the satisfaction of the CoCT have been noted.
1.8.2	Mitigation of potential visual impact	It should, however, be noted that the R44 is designated as a Scenic Route with a S1 status, which possesses significant visual quality. The mitigation measures, as per the Visual Impact Assessment, for the proposed work around the Steynsrust intersection must be adhered to in order to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed work on this important scenic route.	These comments have been noted. As stated in Responses 1.6.5 and 1.6.6 above, the implementation of these mitigation measures have been included in the recommendations of the Final BAR.
1.9	<b>Conclusion</b>		
1.9.1	Conclusion	Having reviewed the application and circulated it to the relevant departments/branches for comment, the Environmental Resource Management Department cannot deem the application desirable at this stage. Final comments can only be provided once the concerns raised above have been addressed. It is recommended that the applicant meet with the Integrated Transport Planning Department in order to address and resolve the concerns raised by this Department. The outcome of this meeting should be included in the Final BAR. The conditions as recommended by certain Departments (as mentioned above) should also be accommodated in the Final BAR	As stated in Responses 1.1.2, 1.2 and 1.3 above, the applicant and the design engineers have met with TCT in order to resolve the concerns of the Integrated Transport Planning Department. Subsequent comment has been received from the Transport department.
2	<b>COMMENTS FROM STELLENBOSCH MUNICIPALITY</b>		
2.1	<b>Initial comment dated 14 April 2016</b>		
2.1.1	Initial comments, including reference to letter dated 28 May 2014	Attached hereto please find for your further attention and handling.  Your letter dated 26 February 2016 refers.  <b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>  The Stellenbosch Municipality considered your revised Basic Assessment Report. It is our view that the content of our letter dated 28 May 2014 is still appropriate. The proposed improvement scheme is not supported by the Municipality. It is our considered view that the proposed upgrades are inappropriate	These comments are noted.  Subsequently the MEC for Transport, Mr Donald Grant, met with the Stellenbosch Municipality where one of the agenda items that was discussed was the proposed improvements of the R44.  As a result, a further meeting was facilitated with some of the technical municipal officials in order to discuss any questions or concerns in connection with the project. Thus a representative of the applicant and the design engineer subsequently met

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	<p>for the area, not in line with integrated planning principles and do not consider the priority transport problem in our area.</p> <p>The impact of the proposal will also, in our view, damage the unique cultural landscape and harm the well-developed tourism economy of the area. The long term function of the road on a regional and local context needs to be agreed upon before the proposed project can be considered.</p> <p>It is again hereby requested that this project be postponed until integrated transport planning has been done for the functional area and that solutions for the median crossing problem be evaluated with the long term vision as a basis.</p> <p><b>2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPAL POSITION:</b></p> <p>The Municipality of Stellenbosch in its letter dated 28 May 2014 stated the following viewpoint and would like to reiterate that view:</p> <p>2.1 There is no long-term integrated strategic plan available regarding the transport planning approach and transportation issues directly related to the broader area. Various plans, policies and documents refer to broader principles, including a focus on public transport and non-motorised transport, rural development criteria, etc., but there is no resultant implementation plan regarding this corridor.</p> <p>2.2 This fact as stated above, is reflected in one of the basic assumptions of the study (see point 1 in the Background to the Proposed Project section above), where the premise is that "The R44 is predominantly a high speed mobility corridor that forms a strategic link between Somerset West and Stellenbosch at a regional transport planning level". This premise is contested by the municipality.</p> <p>2.3 The scale and context of the proposed intervention is considered to be inappropriate. It is the view that this opinion will be borne out in a long-term strategic planning intervention for the greater area.</p> <p>2.4 Within this context, the proposals are deemed to result in the inefficient application of financial resources, due to the inappropriate scale but also due to the sub-optimal phasing of the project and proposed expenditure.</p> <p>2.5 Within the regional context, the proposed project is not considered as the highest priority, especially given the potential financial scale and the limited availability of funding, and the view is held that the resources can be applied more strategically in relation to transport needs for the area, with significantly higher long-term benefits.</p> <p>2.6 The improvements will have a negative impact on the already congested traffic flows in Stellenbosch. Only by conducting an integrated investigation on a broad basis can potential solutions to the area wide issues be identified and evaluated on their merits.</p> <p>2.7 The proposed interventions will have a negative impact on the environmental quality of the area and will harm the economy of the area that is heavily dependent on farming and tourism.</p>	<p>with Messrs Willem Pretorius, Marius Wusi, Dupre Lombaard, Nigell Winter and Ms Janine Waldis of Stellenbosch Municipality on 16 August 2016. The design engineer reported that positive constructive discussions were held. Following this meeting, Stellenbosch Municipality responded that they would submit a formal updated submission on the Revised Draft BAR.</p> <p>A further meeting to discuss the R44 project was held on 15 November 2016 which was attended by the Provincial Minister for Transport, the Stellenbosch Executive Mayor, a Stellenbosch Councillor and various senior officials. Stellenbosch Municipality subsequently sent a letter to DTPW (dated 23 November 2016) in which Stellenbosch Municipality indicates its decision to recall the initial non-support of the BAR and to commit themselves to working together with DTPW. The comments in the above-mentioned letter dated 23 November 016 are included as Comment 2.2 of this report and responses are provided below.</p> <p>In the light of these further developments it is not deemed necessary to respond in detail to the comments contained in the initial letter of 14 April 2016. Please refer to the Draft BAR Comments and Responses Report 1 – Authorities (see Appendix F9) for responses previously provided to comments of the Stellenbosch Municipality in their letter of 28 May 2014, to which reference is made in the initial comments.</p>

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2.8		<p>The Provincial Spatial Development Framework and the Municipality's CTPP advocate the need to improve public transport to make towns and cities more efficient and to reduce transport problems. The roll-out of public transport from Somerset West to Stellenbosch should be investigated and incorporated in this project.</p>	
2.9		<p>The proposals are in direct contravention of current Provincial and Municipal policy. You are requested to consider these principles in relation to the motivation that was provided in our 28 May 2014 letter.</p>	
3.		<p><b>CONCLUSIONS</b></p>	
3.1		<p>Regional priorities must be considered as part of the overall approach with an emphasis on the consideration of the current traffic situation within Stellenbosch and its surrounds. This should be done as part of the shift towards sustainable transport as is required in terms of National, Provincial and Municipal policies, strategies and frameworks. This will require Public and Non-motorised Transport forming an integral part of any project planning and implementation process.</p>	
3.2		<p>Any upgrade to this section of the R44 should thus be incorporated in the development of an integrated approach to transport planning including a comprehensive public transport service serving the broader Stellenbosch area and surrounds.</p>	
3.3		<p>Full consideration should also be given to appropriate Non-motorised Transport facilities. This must recognise the multifaceted nature of NMT in the area, especially regarding cycling with its many profiles - commuter, recreational (including tourism) and sports which may require differing facilities.</p>	
3.4		<p>Given the above, the Basic Assessment is inadequate for a project such as this which has major regional implications not only from a sustainable and safe transport perspective but also socioeconomic and environmental perspectives.</p>	
3.5		<p>This scheme as currently envisaged is not supported.</p>	
4.		<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p>	
4.1		<p>The overall strategy to these upgrades should be reconsidered in conformance with policy and legislation as part of an integrated planning approach for Stellenbosch Municipality and its surrounds.</p>	
4.2		<p>Consideration be given to immediate interim measures focused on improving safety along the route. This should include high visibility, continuous and active enforcement. In this regard the proposal for "Speed over Distance" enforcement should be implemented with immediate effect.</p>	
4.3		<p>The overall strategy must include an alternative second access to Jamestown and make provision for public transport pick up points to create linkage between rural and urban communities and opportunities.</p>	
		<p>We look forward to being able to contribute in any way to ensuring that the appropriate studies are conducted and concepts and designs are considered. Please liaise with our Acting Director:</p>	

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2.2	Revised comments dated 23 November 2016	Engineering Services, Mr Marius Wüst, should you require more detail or to set up an engagement.	
	Meeting	<p>PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE R44 BETWEEN SOMERSET WEST AND STELLENBOSCH: REVISED STELLENBOSCH MUNICIPALITY'S POSITION</p> <p>The meeting of 15 November 2016 between the Western Cape Government, represented by Minister Donald Grant and [Head of Department] HOD Lenn Fourie and the Municipality of Stellenbosch represented by Executive Mayor Gesie van Deventer, Mayo councillor Jan de Villiers, Acting Municipal Manager Dupre Lombaard and Acting Director Infrastructure Willem Pretorius on issues pertaining [to] the interaction between the two entities has reference. Due to the current standing of the municipality's reaction to the BAR of the R44 safety improvements it was crucial that common ground be found on this matter in order for Province to move positively forward in implementing their plans on the R44.</p> <p>Background</p> <p>Over the last few years since 2011, a total of 1 469 accidents occurred on the roads between Somerset West and access to Welgevonden on both the R44 and the R304 west of Welgevonden. Of these accidents, 436 (29%) occurred on the rural section between Stellenbosch and Somerset West. The balance of the accidents on the provincial road system through Stellenbosch (71%) occurred in the built up area of Stellenbosch. It therefore remains a challenge for Stellenbosch to reduce the traffic congestion and high accident rates on provincial roads within Stellenbosch. If the number of accidents is expressed per km travelled in the urban and rural sections of the provincial roads, the figures are 39 accidents/km on R44 south of Stellenbosch and 115 accidents/km on the R44 provincial road in Stellenbosch. It is thus clear that the accident situation on the provincial roads within Stellenbosch is three times worse than on the R44 south of Stellenbosch. The Stellenbosch Municipality would therefore support any assistance in addressing this serious road safety situation. The original "non-support" of the BAR for the R44 was based on these figures and through the meeting and discussion of the broader planning principles it was realised that the support of the BAR of the R44 could indeed be connected to the possible solution to the regional problem in the form of the Western by-pass that will allow for the 40% through traffic to not enter the congested situation within Stellenbosch and reduce the risk of accidents. We are still of the opinion that to achieve optimal solutions in this particular case a combination of interventions would be far more beneficial and allow maximum financial gain. Province indicated that they do not have the Western Bypass as an option on their priorities and challenged the Municipality to investigate the possibility and provide them with a workable solution.</p> <p>Stellenbosch adhered to the challenge in determining the route for this Western bypass and appointed a consulting team to do the preliminary feasibility and layout of this crucial route. A proposed route layout and planning principles were tabled at the meeting and it was agreed that it would definitely influence the final decision on the R44 safety initiatives from Province and the request was for the municipality to involve province in the planning stage in order for them to effectively take over at a point in time to finalise the detail design of the road. The "shifting" of the Annandale intersection with the R44 towards Stellenbosch also needed a relook after the concept of the Western Bypass indicated that the entire road network in that vicinity would benefit from this move.</p>	<p>It was noted that the most recent meeting between the Western Cape Government and Stellenbosch Municipality served to find common ground regarding the proposed safety improvements to the R44 between Somerset West and Stellenbosch. As a result, Stellenbosch Municipality decided to recall their initial non-support of the BAR for the proposed project.</p> <p>The accident figures provided in the comments underlines the urgent need to improve safety conditions on the R44.</p> <p>DTPW has indicated that it will provide assistance to Stellenbosch to identifying a solution. It can further be confirmed that DTPW will take over the feasibility study into addressing the proposed "western bypass". This study will inter alia serve to provide clarity on possible alternative route alignments and link points for a bypass road.</p> <p>In 2017 DTPW will commence with a R 100 million upgrade of Annandale Road along the existing alignment. The construction contract of two years is due to commence in January 2017. This confirms, by implication, that DTPW will not be considering any changes to the Annandale Road alignment and its intersection with the R44 intersection anytime in the future. Any future development of a bypass would thus have to link into the existing intersection location..</p>

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		<p>Based on the positive discussions around the Western Bypass and how this road would alleviate various traffic problems on the R44 in and around Stellenbosch the Municipality decided to recall their initial non-support of the BAR and commit themselves to working together with Province in achieving a functional and safe road network in and around Stellenbosch</p> <p>Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you require any further information.</p>	
3.	COMMENTS FROM CAPE NATURE		
3.1	General	<p>Please find attached comment from CapeNature on the Revised Draft Basic Assessment Report for the Proposed Improvements to the R44 between Somerset West and Stellenbosch.</p> <p>CapeNature would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed development and would like to make the following comments. Please note that our comments only pertain to the biodiversity related impacts and not to the overall desirability of the proposed development.</p> <p>CapeNature reserves the right to revise initial comments and request further information based on any additional information that may be received.</p>	<p>These general comments have been noted.</p>
3.2	Draft BAR comments	<p>CapeNature commented previously on the Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) in which we did not indicate any objection and supported the findings of the specialist studies and the implementation of relevant mitigation measures. We are satisfied that our comments on the Draft BAR have been adequately addressed in the comments and response report.</p>	<p>These comments confirming CapeNature's satisfaction that previous comments have been adequately addressed, have been noted.</p>
3.3	Potential botanical impacts	<p>The project proposal has been revised based on concerns raised in the process and further studies that have been undertaken, however these concerns do not relate to biodiversity. Addendums have been compiled for both the botanical and freshwater specialist studies. The botanical specialist addendum has indicated that the revised proposal will have much the same impact as the original proposal, whereby the areas affected by the upgrades are transformed and will result in impacts of a low significance.</p> <p>It is noted that the one additional area affected at the proposed Jamestown Cemetery U-turn contains pioneer (i.e. regenerated following disturbance) renosterveld. We do not differ from the findings of the botanical specialist that this vegetation is of low conservation value and therefore does not have to be avoided. However, it does indicate that renosterveld can return to the road reserves following construction although it is unlikely to return to the state and conservation value of renosterveld that has never been disturbed, particularly in terms of species diversity. CapeNature does however support the proposed rehabilitation of the road reserve as contained in the environmental management plan.</p>	<p>CapeNature's endorsement of the findings of the botanical specialist and support for the proposed rehabilitation of the road reserve as contained in the Construction EMP has been noted.</p>
3.4	Potential freshwater impacts	<p>The freshwater specialist study also indicated that the revised proposal would have much the same impact as the original proposal, with minimal impacts on the freshwater environment, and only highly impacted, minor watercourses being affected. There are however seasonal/temporary wetland areas identified to the west of the proposed Jamestown Cemetery U-Turn. Based on the design diagrams</p>	<p>Relevant mitigation measures regarding the potential impact of stormwater management along the road on the freshwater environment during the construction and operational phases have been included in the Final BAR as well as in the Construction EMP.</p>