



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

92 Umdoni Road, Amanzimtoti, 4126

Tel/Fax: 031 914 3871

Mobile: 082 741 3094

Email: krw@telkomsa.net

9 September 2014

Clinton Chrystal
Coastal Engineering Department
eThekweni Municipality
166 K.E Masinga Road, Durban, 4001
P.O. Box 680, Durban, South Africa,
4000

Re: Virginia Beach proposed upgrade - Coast watch comments

Dear Clinton

Thank you for your mail and opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by Coast watch.

As per my brief, this was a vegetation mapping exercise and not an analysis of the coastal process at play within the site. It was done to identify vegetation types/species that would possibly be at risk whilst considering various options for the proposed areas upgrade.

3 formal options have now been produced for consideration and I am able to comment on them below.

Despite the development of the Virginia airport in 1959 and subsequent local urbanisation the overall "state of health" of the vegetation within the area is very good. There is good species diversity in both the fore dune and Climax coastal forest areas. Any encroachment into the climax forest areas is not advisable as it will open up the understory to salt laden winds resulting in a lack of species diversity. For this reason, I am not in favour of Option 2.

Option 3 is further encroaching into the coastal zone at the turning circle and is possibly too isolated for security reasons.

I am in support of option 1 as the impact remains limited to primarily the existing infrastructure footprint, the roadway to the north is shortened and the dune environment reinstated. The additional upgrades to the ablution surrounds have limited effect on the coastal vegetation or processes as the area is already disturbed.

I am not in favour of the sacrificial walkway to the north in option1 and do not see the need for such.

I concur with Coast watch that dune rehabilitation is not necessarily required on this site and have proposed the formalisation of the existing pedestrian access routes to the beach to prevent any further loss of vegetative cover on the fore dune system due to trampling as a result of increased visitors to the site. The only areas that may require some rehabilitation are the areas surrounding the storm water outfall site currently being upgraded, the roadway and around the refurbished ablutions/Kiosk.

I do not foresee the climax coastal forest that is between the Virginia airport runway and the unnamed road being negatively affected by the proposed formalisation/upgrading of the existing infrastructure. (As per option 1) The proposed new fencing will however restrict illegal dumping and restrict the easy access to the forest by the "car guards"/vagrants that currently reside under the canopy.

As there are no major infrastructural changes proposed for the site, I do not believe that the eastwards widening of the roadway or the paving around the existing ablutions will have an adversely negative impact on the vegetation or the coastal process at work in this area.

Kind regards

Keith Walters