

APPENDIX G

LETTER TO DEA – TUNNEL & R617 CORRIDORS



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Department of Environmental Affairs
Private Bag X447
Pretoria
0001

Re: THE UMKHOMAZI WATER PROJECT PHASE 1 - RAW WATER (DEA REFERENCE NO. 14/12/16/3/3/3/94) – ASSESSMENT OF CORRIDORS FOR THE TUNNEL ROUTE AND R617 REALIGNMENT

Dear Masina

The Final Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports for the proposed uMkhomazi Water Project Phase 1 (uMWP-1) Raw Water and Potable Water were submitted to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) on 10 November 2016. A letter (dated 13 February 2017) was received from DEA which rejected the Final EIA Report for the Raw Water component primarily based on biodiversity issues. Some of the reasons provided for this decision included the following:

- The re-alignment of the R617 would require that portions of the Impendle Nature Reserve would need to be de-proclaimed in order to accommodate this realignment; and
- Insufficient attention has been given to the consideration of the three alternative locations for the proposed balancing dam and tunnel alignment.

This letter serves to notify DEA that as part of the approach to address the above comments, corridors are being investigated for the tunnel route and R617 realignment (see maps contained in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively). This approach was discussed with DEA during a meeting held on 11 August 2017. The intention is to seek approval for these corridors, rather than for a set alignment for these linear components, due to the following reasons:

- A corridor for the tunnel will allow for the route deviations to take place to avoid or minimise sensitive environmental features, such as Blue Swallow nest areas. Note that the potential noise and vibration impacts of the tunnel to Blue Swallows will be assessed as part of the additional work that is to be undertaken to address DEA's comments on the Final EIA Report. This will provide further information on the need for the tunnel route to avoid these nest sites.
- A corridor for the R617 will allow for the route to be realigned to avoid sensitive areas (e.g. Impendle Nature Reserve) and to minimise impacts to pedestrians and members of the local communities from reaching the main road and public amenities (e.g. schools). The R617 realignment is being assessed by the engineering team.
- As the DWS project life-cycle is only in the Feasibility Stage, there may be changes to the layout of the infrastructure as the project advances through the detailed design stage, if Environmental Authorisation (EA) is obtained. A corridor allows for deviations to take place as part of the technical optimisation of the tunnel and R617 routes without having to seek an amended to the EA.

The following is noted with regards to the proposed corridors:

- The corridors will be assessed by the respective environmental specialists to determine whether there are any additional adverse impacts that need to be evaluated and mitigated;
- Apart from the inlet, central and outlet portals, as well as the shafts for ventilation purposes, the tunnel runs below ground. The tunnel thus has limited surface impacts; and
- The corridors primarily include the same landowners that were notified during the EIA process to date. All affected landowners will be notified of the corridors for the tunnel route and R617 deviation.

Further details of the corridors, including the outcomes of the environmental and technical assessments, will be included in the Addendum to the Final EIA Report.

We hope that the above meets with your approval and request that the Department confirms that there is an in principle agreement with the corridor approach.

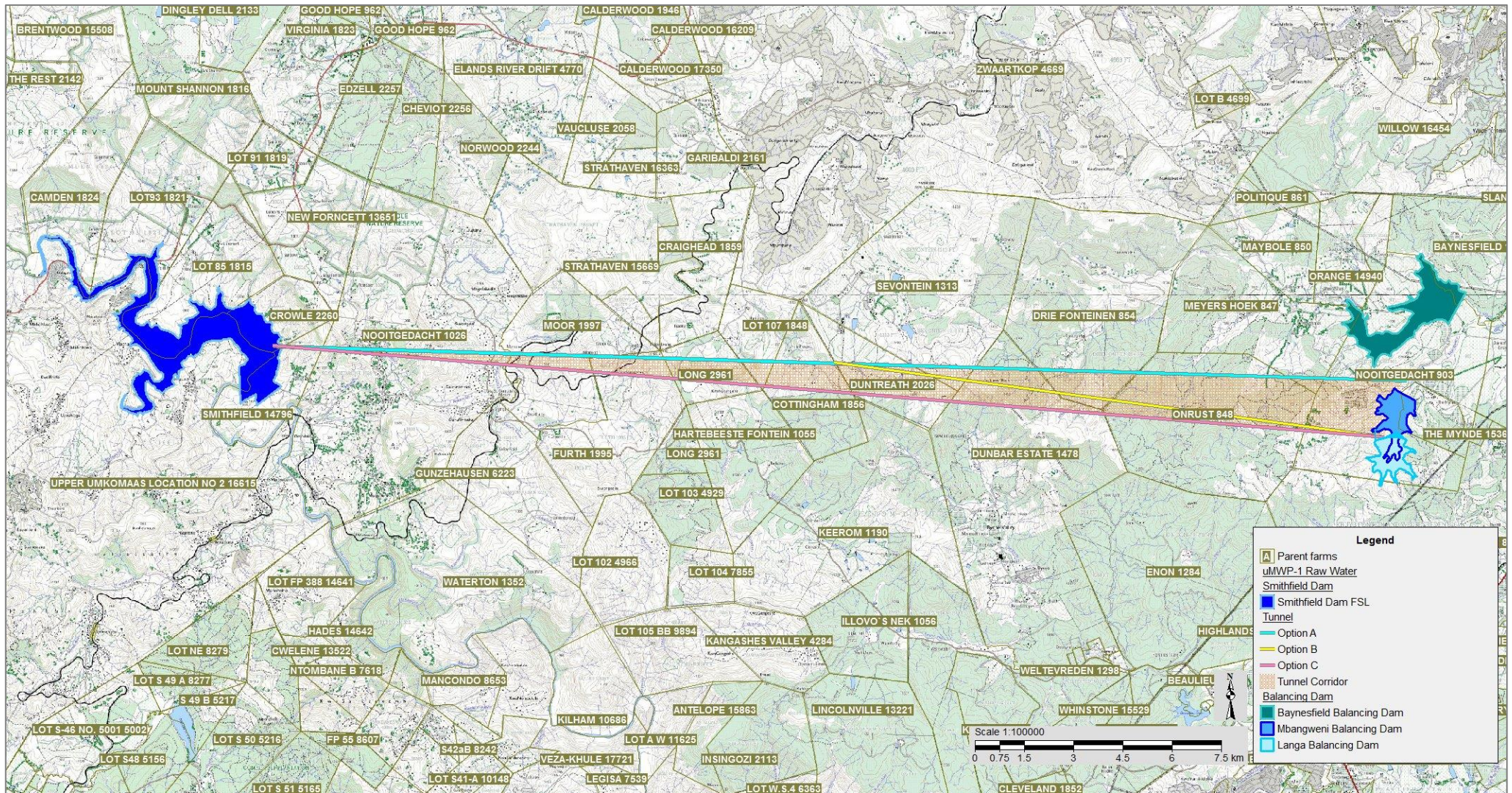
You are welcome to contact the undersigned for any queries.

Yours faithfully

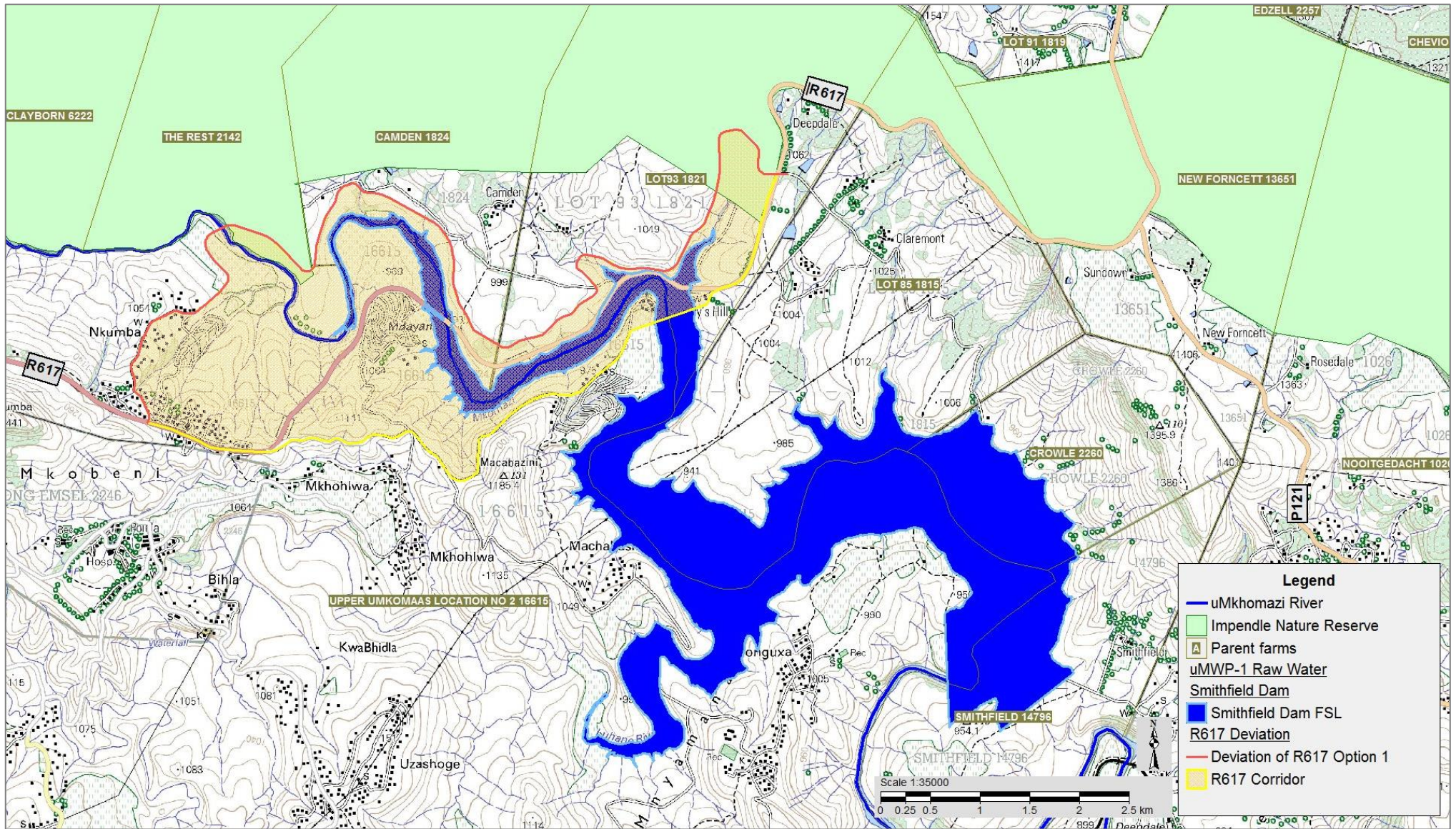
Nemai Consulting C.C.



Donovan Henning
Environmental Assessment Practitioner



uMWP-1 Raw Water – Tunnel Corridor (Note: not all project components shown)



uMWP-1 Raw Water – R617 Corridor (Note: not all project components shown)