

**APPENDIX 15.17**  
**SENSE OF PLACE REPORT**  
**BY**  
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# **The Sense of Place and Hilcove Hills' Proposed Development: Concepts, Research and Recommendations**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The report investigates the complex issue of a sense of place in and around Hilcove Hills, on the north-eastern perimeter of the built-up areas of Msunduzi. Sense of place most often refers to the unique attributes of places.

Despite the complexity, four main conclusions stand out:

1. In landscape and ecological terms, expert assessments have been that there is little 'special' about the area.
2. A cross-spectrum of adjacent area person's constructs of Msunduzi places generally reveals very little consciousness of rural and/or ecological constructs, as opposed to strong concerns about local public services.
3. It is probable that the place-consciousness of those participating in the EIA process differs significantly from a cross spectrum of residents, insofar as the scoping exercise foregrounded ecological and rural issues which appear to be hypothetical and defensive.
4. The current development proposals are likely to have the most positive impacts amongst the six options contemplated in the Plan of Study.
5. If a properly constituted and managed lot owners association enhanced the quality of local public services within the proposed new development, it could emerge as a beacon of hope in the context of alienation from local public serving quality.

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## **1. Objectives**

This report arises out of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the proposed development of the Hilcove Hills area of Pietermaritzburg/Msunduzi. This area is on the north-eastern edge of the currently built-up area of the city. There have been various proposals for the development of the area that have been the subject of public participation processes, professional specialist studies, and government review for some time, with the result that plans for the area have been amended to accommodate a range of environmental concerns.

In the Final Environmental Scoping Report for the EIA of June 2011, Section 8 (pp.33-42) of the report refers to the views of those who participated in the EIA process, and in summary these were that:

- Bio-physical issues and natural environmental considerations were uppermost in the comments, likely because EIA processes are construed in such a way (i.e. bio-physically); however, in the interpretation of the Scoping Report's author, and also in the recollections of the present author from previous EIA processes on this area –
- Commentators from the west and northwest, and on the conventional urban edge, expressed few concerns at the proposed development, save that there were worries at possible traffic and crime impacts, and limited visual impacts; and people expressed preference for open spaces to be privately rather publicly managed.
- To the east and northeast, expressed concerns were more pronounced and focused primarily upon bio-diversity and visual impact issues.

The present specialist study is part of the process that follows on from the Final Scoping Report, and it focuses on the environmental issue of sense/s of place that could be of relevance to the development.

The concept of sense of place is elaborated in section 2 to follow. In the interim, however, it may be noted that it has emerged after research that the implications of sense/s of place research are by no means clear-cut, and sometimes even contradictory. The apparent contradictions emerge out of a cross-spectrum of local views, which in several respects differ from the expressed ideas of at least some active participants in the EIA process. Nevertheless it is possible to suggest certain mitigation measures that should assist in making the project more acceptable to most parties, and these suggestions are made in the conclusion to the report.

The report consists of five subsequent sections: section 2 to follow reviews key concepts pertaining to the study and reflects upon some of their methodological implications; section 3 reviews some so-called objective or expert perspectives on the nature of Hilcove Hills as a

place; section 4 discusses field research into a cross-spectrum of senses of places in areas bordering on Hilcove Hills; section 5 analyses the policy implications in relation to alternative uses; and section 6 provides a summary and conclusions including mitigation measures.

The reader is cautioned at the outset that because both the methods and the evidence in this case are complex, this report is likely a more difficult read than for most impact reports. Making sense of the contradictions in this case requires patience, and is unlikely to be digested easily after just one read.

## **2. Key concepts and methodological implications**

In the KZN Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs' request to the applicant, a specific call was made to commission a specialist study of 'sense of place' as it pertains to the Hilcove Hills area. This concept partly overlaps with visual impact aspect which is the subject of a separate study by Ganville Jaques, but it is also different. It is different in that sense of place is largely a subjective concept comprised of individual's cognitions of their known environments, as distinct from objectively verifiable sight-lines. In common with the visual impact study, however, the present one is applied to the various development alternatives as contemplated in The Hilcove Plan of Study dated 13-01-2012. These are given there as:

1. The site being developed as an eco-estate, with low density residential developments being inserted into the natural bush.
2. The division of the site into small holding / garden type lots, in a similar manner as occurs in some neighbouring areas such as Ashburton.
3. The development of the site for social (low cost) housing, in a similar manner as occurs in other areas of Pietermaritzburg .
4. The development of the site for commercial and light industrial use.
5. The development of the site in terms of the proposed layout plan, as represented in the scoping report, but subject perhaps to some amendments as a result of the findings of the specialist reports.
6. No development of the site, i.e. the status quo.

The sense of place concept is not always familiar, and requires a little unpacking here. The author of this report has been exposed<sup>1</sup> to the sense of place concept on many occasions in the past, subjective definitions of it having been in intellectual vogue in geography some two to three decades ago; although there have been attempts to 'objectify' the concept in applied research since then.

Key findings from the pioneering research in this area will be elaborated shortly. However, as a prelude to that elaboration, it should be noted the author revisited the 'sense of place' concept in applied studies and professional journals anew in 2012 and found (i) that there are several practitioners who work on the arguable assumption that senses of place can be objectively defined; and (ii) that many of the conclusions of applied research on the subject today implicitly relate to its direct opposite – a fear of the "placeless".

The objectivists will often point out that there are certain facts about places – for example geomorphic form, vegetation, historical features and existing architecture that give places a fixed 'character'. Moreover, it is implied such character is potentially vulnerable to erosion, for example through urban development. As the current Wikipedia Encyclopaedia's definition of sense of place correctly observes, the opposite of a sense of place is 'placelessness':

'Places that lack a "sense of place" are sometimes referred to as "placeless" or "inauthentic." Placeless landscapes are those that have no special relationship to the places in which they are located—they could be anywhere. Roadside strip shopping malls, gas/petrol stations and convenience stores, fast food chains, and chain department stores are often cited as examples of placeless landscape elements' ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sense\\_of\\_place](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sense_of_place), accessed 25 January 2012).

The question thus arises: how would concerns such as this – fear of place anonymity - relate to the future development of Hilcove Hills? In part it might be to recommend significant elements of continuity between the present 'objective' landscape and the future, but unfortunately the matter is not as simple as this.

Many expert researchers on the sense of place – the affective bond between people and places – argue that a sense of place is not 'objective'. Rather, they point out that senses of place are 'subjective constructs' (dependent upon the meanings assigned by specific

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<sup>1</sup> As a previous Professor of Human Geography, Editor of the SA Geographical Journal and President of The SA Geographical Society, the present author was/ is familiar with the theme especially within the so-called humanistic school of cultural geographers.

individuals). Moreover, a pioneering researcher in the field concluded that in many ways sense of place is a defensive reaction to change, like many other human constructs:

“In a sense, every human construction, whether mental or material, is a component in a landscape of fear because it exists in constant chaos. Thus children’s fairy tales as well as adult’s legends, cosmological myths, and indeed philosophical systems are shelters built by the mind in which human beings can rest, at least temporarily, from the siege of inchoate experience and of doubt.” (citation from Prof Yi Fu Tuan, Emeritus Professor of Geography, pioneering researcher on sense of place, and author of numerous books on same, including Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values, Prentice-Hall, 1974, 260 pp. Space and Place: The Perspectives of Experience, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977, and London: Edward Arnold’s 1977, 227 pp. (paperback edition, University of Minnesota Press, 1979); and Landscapes of Fear, New York: Pantheon, 1970 and Blackwell’s, Oxford, 1980, 262 pp.; this citation taken from the last-mentioned).

Whilst Tuan and other researchers on sense of place do make some generalizations about place identity, such as the generalization cited above, most researchers in the field note that it is highly individualized. It is for this reason that methodologies that respect individual variability in respect of place identity are relevant when doing applied research on developments that could affect such identity.

Perhaps the most individual-respecting method in this regard is the repertory grid methodology based upon personal construct theory (see for example Fransella, F., Bell, R., Bannister, D. *A Manual for Repertory Grid Technique. Second Edition*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2004). The survey instrument contained in Appendix 1 to this report, and used in the field for this study, is based upon repertory grid concepts, although simplified to make it more accessible to the present subject matter.

The repertory grid, as used in clinical psychology, works from the common-sense assumption that psychology as a science seeks set order to the otherwise potentially chaotic facts of human experience, so that psychologists can make good predictions about what people will do when confronted by new situations. Likewise, there is the common-sense assumption that it is each individual subject’s task (not only the psychologists’) in developing their personal psychology to put *order* to the facts of his or her own experience.

The important point here is that the personal construct school of psychologists do not superimpose some *a priori* theory of the human psyche (as for example in classical Freudian psychoanalysis, etc.), but rather start from the assumption that people can only cognise that which they know (that is, the ‘elements of experience’). How does the repertory grid put such order to such individualised experience? The important differences to the repertory

grid methodology, versus others, is that it (i) does not supply respondents with any pre-suggestions about values or priorities, but (ii) rather it works backwards from the objects of *individual's* experiences towards their *individual* 'constructs' about those objects/elements.

In the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia definition:

"[Personal constructs] are based on our interpretations of our observations and experiences. Every construct is bipolar, specifying how two things are similar to each other (lying on the same pole) and different from a third thing"(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/personal\_construct\_theory).

It is this methodology that the survey instrument in Appendix 1 is based on, where neighbourhoods known to the respondent are used to develop their sense of the ordering of such areas and their priorities about them. In this way we can know according to what *constructs* people in localities bordering on Hilcove Hills would build their own sense of place.

### **3. Expert and historical-formal definitions of the place**

Before entering into the subjective domain, some observations on expert, objective and historical-formal definitions of the place/s under study are merited.

First: Hilcove Hills as an area was/is a component of the Ashburton to Howick corridor that was the subject of a KZN Planning Commission study in 1997, where some of the province's leading experts classified the landscape on six sets of sixty 1: 10 000 orthophoto maps.<sup>2</sup> It can be derived from GIS encodings from that set of maps that, on all of the classifications set out there, Hilcove Hills had 'no special character', by comparison to many other areas which were identified as having unusually meritorious landscape of natural features.

Two cases in point relate to (i) Hilcove Hills' natural vegetation, which Dr George Begg (a leading botanist) defined as "acacia sieberana savannah – low (quality)"; and (ii) Hillcove Hills' landscape, which Professor Brian Kearney (a leading architectural conservationist) defined as a "disturbed landscape" (in contrast to other areas defined as 'landscapes of considerable significance, landscapes of major interest', etc).

In short, on this first set of expert definitions, Hilcove Hills is somewhat characterless or placeless.

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<sup>2</sup> *Land Evaluation and Planning the Ashburton-Howick Corridor*, KZN Planning Commission, 1997.

But, second: Having said this, the same report also noted that – at that time – there was a Transitional Local Council for the Ashburton area whose main objectives included ‘maintenance of rural village atmosphere’; and in an appendix to the report it was also noted that officials in the then TLC regarded ‘Pietermaritzburg as their biggest threat’.

Whilst Hilcove Hills was not either then or now functionally (as distinct from formally) part of Ashburton, it is possible that it’s bordering on the city’s edge (and perceived potential for development) could have been seen even then as part of the ‘Pietermaritzburg threat’. However, this is speculative, and in the event, the Demarcation Board’s subsequent incorporation of all areas up to Umlaas Road as part of a new Msunduzi Council reflects their own formalisation of another widespread view that both Hilcove Hills and Ashburton were rather part of wider Pietermaritzburg/Msunduzi.

Nevertheless, as we determine from the survey responses below, there were/are possibly mixed reactions to this incorporation, along with a perceived loss of local autonomy.

#### **4. The survey sample and the fieldwork**

Field research in the complex and even divided society that is South Africa, is not always the simplest of tasks. This is for a variety of reasons, including our complex cultural-political legacy, and the repertory methodology is not always the simplest to execute. Nevertheless, by using an intelligent and sensitive researcher to ask questions of a balanced sample of people, living or working in the areas surrounding the proposed development, some important guidelines can be derived on what it is that planners and urban designers should watch for in relation to place identity.

The appointed fieldworker was a work-experienced senior-post-graduate town planning student who interviewed forty respondents from the areas immediately around the Hilcove Hills site. His instructions were to randomly access people available in Ashburton north, Hayfields, Lincoln Meade, and Lincoln Meade north/east (ten from each) in order to derive a spatially stratified sample of respondents near/in the place that we are interested in ‘senses of’. The sample was also racially stratified, with about one third of respondents being white, another third Asian or coloured; and the balance African.

The initial questions in the survey simply ask the respondents to identify three ‘other areas of Maritzburg’ that are known to them apart from ‘this one’ (i.e. one of the four existing settlements adjacent to Hilcove Hills). These known ‘elements of experience’ are interrogated as to their similarities and differences; and following three repetitions of the process, the derived constructs are used to first establish respondent’s senses of their



priorities; and, second, the respondent's ratings of their own and other peoples neighbourhoods according to these priorities.

The following *verbatim* extracts from the notes of the interviewer may assist in understanding aspects of the sample and responses:

My daily routine was to start at Ashburton and spend some time there depending on the amount of traffic. I would then move to firstly Hayfield from the Mkhondeni end then Lincoln Meade and Lincoln Meade 'North' cemetery area respectively. [Where it was difficult to access some categories of respondents], I did follow-up interviews by telephone.....Some respondents found the survey somewhat 'challenging'. I would attempt to put them at ease repeating the statement that there is no wrong or right answer, it's just your opinion whatever it may be....I also noticed a correlation between education levels, race and willingness to stick with the format of the survey [but adjusted the approach where necessary to achieve co-operation]".

The present author reviewed the overall results of the questionnaires and analysed them in quantitative and qualitative terms. Whilst there were minor variations in patterns of response from different areas and categories of respondents, what was more striking in initially quantitative terms was the high degree of *convergence* of constructs used, and the deviation of the most commonly used (and most highly rated) constructs from those more typically used by planning professionals including environmentalists, architects/urban designers, town planners and socio-economic impact analysts.

Indeed, the constructs used also bear little resemblance to those emerging out of the public participation process for the EIA. The main construct/contrast categories that emerged were as in the list overleaf.

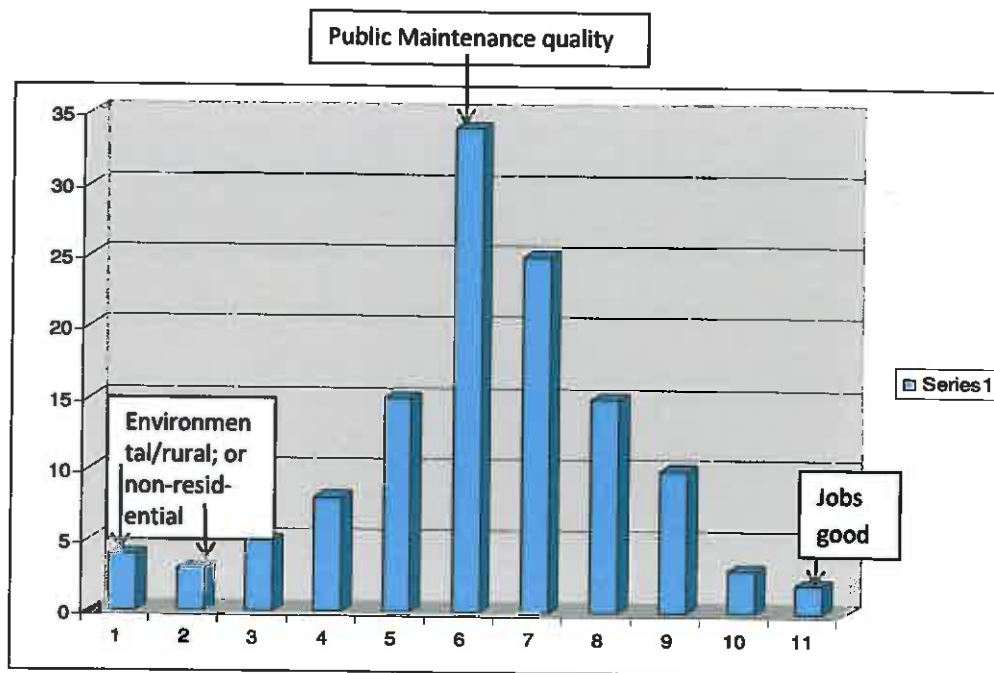
As can be determined, concepts of rural or natural environmental characteristics (which often emerge in EIA processes) are some of the least frequently mentioned. Initially one might surmise that this is due to differences in the social characteristics of those actively participating in EIA processes by contrast with a representative sample. However, on closer inspection, this is an insufficient explanation.

For example, in applied studies of 'development priorities' in other KZN areas recently conducted by the author, jobs availability emerged as most important to especially African respondents. Moreover, jobs most often emerge in other non-EIA processes concerned with

CONSTRUCT	CONTRAST
1. Environment natural/rural	Urban
2. Non-residential use	Residential
3. Racial mixed	Single race
4. Distinctive architecture	Not distinctive/poor architecture
5. Upmarket area	Down-market area
6. Public maintenance quality bad	Public maintenance better
7. Congested/noisy place	Quiet place
8. Suburban	High density/central
9. High crime	Less crime
10. Community character	No community
11. Jobs in area	No jobs

Figure 1 below graphs the distribution of the frequency of use of such constructs by the sample as a whole.

**Figure 1: Frequency distribution of group constructs (number of mentions = x axis)**



planning related issues - e.g. local government elections, or social surveys. But mentioning of variations of jobs availability did not substantially influence even the black sub-sample's constructions about place local identity (indeed there were only two mentions of this construct in the sample as a whole, see figure 1 above).

In other words, the cognitions of places in and around Pietermaritzburg/Msunduzi are being constructed by those adjacent to Hilcove Hills according to 'mental building blocks' made up (mainly) of something other than that which seemingly sit uppermost in most policy-makers minds. Indeed, even factors which built environment professionals often prioritise – like distinctive architecture – emerge with quite low frequency.

When one moves beyond aggregate frequencies some important subtleties arise which we will refer to shortly. However, in the interim the key point to start with is the admission by ourselves (as professionals and policy makers) that we may not always know how people in areas *are* actually constructing their senses of place; and for us to recognise that - for most - this starts with constructs about public space maintenance (refuse removal, potholes, etc).

The second important point is about ratings of neighbourhoods at local level. We found that most of our sample of middle class respondents from the more ostensibly rural subareas of Ashburton and Lincoln Meade hardly mentioned rural or natural environmental constructs when they rated their own areas, and other areas (see the last questions on the questionnaire in Appendix 1). Rather, what struck them as most valuable about their *own* areas (Ashburton and Lincoln Meade) when they are asked to "please rank your top three neighbourhood qualities or features", most obviously, were:

- (again) **poor municipal maintenance** (e.g. garbage which is allegedly collected only a week after it is put out, potholed roads, etc.) receiving **nine mentions**; and,
- closely followed with **eight mentions**, by perceived **crime levels**.

These frequently mentioned aspects of rating can be compared to other less identified rating features for Lincoln Meade and Ashburton, like smallholdings (only three mentions) or peacefulness (only two mentions).

Once one has absorbed these points from the survey and then takes a dispassionate camera's eye view of some of the streetscape say in Ashburton, the 'scars' of artificial tunnel farming or accumulated rubbish, and razor wire on property perimeters, leap out from the ostensibly natural environment background and into the foreground.

Figure 2, below, is one example of this, but there are many others. This type of camera-view also causes the analyst to return to the likely veracity of Professor Brian Kearney's 'objective' definition of these areas as a 'disturbed landscapes', that definition having been reached even fifteen years ago.

Perhaps, then, there is a greater convergence between subjective and objective definitions of place, than might at first appear.

**Figure 2: A Roadside View in Ashburton**



However, as we can determine from respondents in the EIA public participation process, there is an energetic (if possibly small) group who have been defining the Hilcove Hills area in terms of bio-physical and/or rural concepts. In this they share values in common with some peri-urban activists who oppose urban expansion throughout the world<sup>3</sup>. Thus for example in the Final Scoping Report it is recorded *inter alia* that some said:

'They love having open farmland next to them' or

'A wider open space connecting to this grassland area should be considered', or

'...the whole site [is] irreplaceable, and after development the grassland is going to be cut off, it needs to be included in the game reserve, with the connecting corridor to the rest of the game reserve being wider'.

(These are just examples of sentiment and are not intended to reflect on individuals).

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<sup>3</sup> See van Dijk, T. & van der Wulp, N. (2010). Not in my open space: Anatomy of neighbourhood activism in defence of land use conversion. *Landscape and Urban Planning*. 96:19-28.

Such sentiments pose a challenge: Is it possible to reconcile such implied senses of place with the concerns of the sample as a whole (and those of Ashburton and parts of Lincoln Meade in particular) with poor public infrastructure maintenance and crime when it comes to what is uppermost in their place ratings? Part of the answer may lie in Tuan's observation earlier about the relationship of place consciousness to landscapes of fear (and we return to this point in our recommendations); and part may also lie in what the famous Irish sociologist Benedict Anderson once termed as the social construction of 'imagined communities'.<sup>4</sup> That is: Some of the most forceful statements of place consciousness often have little to do with the objective characteristics of place, but rather may be idealisations.

This, of course, places many a planner in something of a cleft stick. EIA methodology typically requires objective indicators of 'impact' and then the adoption of objective 'mitigation measures' where necessary. But what if:

- There are contradictory or at least competing senses of place?; and/or
- Possible mitigation measures for a subset of senses of place are not practically or legally possible?, and/or
- Because some senses of place are idealisations, practical mitigation measures may not be possible because the issues are more symbolic or even political?

The main implication of posing these questions is to indicate that the challenges of not offending (and preferably improving) senses of place in and around Hilcove Hills are complex. They may not be completely resolved from conventional matrix evaluation approaches to the six use options under consideration for the Hilcove Hills site. This is partly because some of the more important of them are not necessarily about the actual or potential use of the Hilcove Hills site. Rather, EIA debates or processes might set off 'triggers' pertaining to neighbourhood or even region-wide constructs or issues, like the quality of local government servicing, or crime, or grief at already eroded natural/rural qualities in peri-urban areas. Some of these concerns will be more properly addressed through other external process, rather through any amendments to existing or planned use of the site.

## **5. The Six Site Options and Likely Impacts**

With the abovementioned observations, qualifications and complexities in mind, we now turn to the penultimate task of assessing likely impacts upon senses of place of the six use options as they were set out in the Plan of Study and on pp2-3 of the present report. In the

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<sup>4</sup> Anderson in his book, *Imagined Communities*, was mainly analysing the roots of nationalism which is a particular form of place-consciousness; but as he points the principles are much the same for lower-level locality identification. He argues that localities are deliberately 'constructed' by those who seek to control them.

table below, the author has sought to infer the implications for the four main 'clusters' of place construct that have presented themselves around Hilcove Hills. These are the majority concerns with public serving quality (construct 6 and the most frequent rating used for Asburton, Lincoln Meade) and crime challenges (construct 9 and second top rating used in Ashburton, Lincoln Meade); and substantial minority concerns with 'upmarket suburbia' (constructs 5,7,8) and minority concerns with nature and rural characteristics (construct 1 and the Final Scoping Report record of issues). Sometimes these implications are more obvious or direct, as in the case say of low income housing or industrial development on the site for those holding the rural and/or environmental cluster of values. In other cases they may be more indirect as in the implications of industry for example for municipal rates and likely servicing quality. Inevitably the impact ratings assigned will be seen as arguable perhaps in strength, but the direction of impacts are likely less arguable.

**Table 1: Matrix of likely impacts on main clusters of place construct of alternative uses**

<b>USE</b>	<b>Services Quality</b>	<b>Crime concerns</b>	<b>Upmarket suburban</b>	<b>Nature, rural concerns</b>	<b>Aggregate</b>
Eco-estate	Neutral	Neutral	Mild positive	Mild positive	Neutral plus
Smallholdings	Mild negative	Neutral to negative	Neutral	Mild positive	Neutral minus
Low Cost Housing	Mild negative	Strong negative	Strong negative	Strong negative	Strong negative
Commercial & industrial	Strong positive	Mild negative	Neutral	Strong negative	Neutral minus
The Proposal	Mild positive	Neutral	Strong positive	Mild negative	Mild positive
Status Quo	Mild negative	Mild negative	Neutral	Mild Positive	Neutral minus

In terms of this matrix the least desirable option in terms of place consciousness, on aggregate, is low income housing, with all the remaining options except two being mildly negative. Of the remaining two, eco-estate use emerges as above neutral and the proposal as mildly positive. The reason that even these last two cannot emerge as unambiguously strongly positive is that the prevailing place constructs in around Hilcove Hills, as we have pointed out earlier, are themselves ambiguous and sometimes contradictory.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

On the evidence gathered here, the development proposals that have been planned for Hilcove Hills (and gone through several iterations already) are likely as close as possible to not offending majority, or aggregate, senses of place. However, several qualifications need to be made to this core conclusion, and there are practical recommendations that flow from these qualifications.

First, we have noted earlier that a subtext to concerns about sense of place is often a fear of 'placelessness'. This is something that creative architects and urban designers can and should address, for example in the implementation phase through use of local building materials and surfaces that integrate well with the residual elements of the natural environment. Consultation of such urban designers and architects with participants in the EIA process and others about a desirable 'look' to the development would also likely reduce adjacent activist's apparent alienation and fears.

But this is not to say that any – even highly indigenised - changes to the area will satisfy all people's sense of place, or mollify all activists. If one accepts Professor Tuan's observation about place identity being closely linked to 'landscapes of fear'; and that senses of place on the part of many are "shelters built by the mind in which human beings can rest, at least temporarily, from the siege of inchoate experience and of doubt" (Tuan), occasionally angry reactions to possible any land use change in peri-urban areas throughout the world can be made more understandable<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, this is not only true of peri-urban areas, as research shows that imminent change in or near one's neighbourhoods are usually the starting points for the effort that goes into what is sometimes known as 'neighbourhood activism' in cities.

Yet the social construction of sense of place that often informs such leading activists may not always be representative.<sup>6</sup> As our research into personal constructions of places in the Maritzburg/Msunduzi East area reveal, not only are such constructions highly individualised, but: When a representative sample of respondent's constructs as a whole are analysed, comparatively few refer to concepts deployed either by neighbourhood activists contributing to EIA processes, or environmental professionals, or indeed even urban

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<sup>5</sup> See note 3 above. The European Commission has circulated summaries of this and other research to environmental planners to assist them in dealing with the challenges posed by such activists, and notes that they are typically more educated and adept at communication than other groups.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the best individual correlates of such activism in many countries are levels of education and self-perceptions of the efficacy of social action.

planners. Their foci tend rather to be on issues of lack of local service delivery (especially refuse removal), and on noise, traffic and roads quality issues.

Such issues are more important to widespread senses of place in Eastern Msunduzi than are those raised in the Final Scoping Report. However, they are unlikely to be addressed in a satisfactory manner through EIA processes; save to say that if the proposed development had a Property/Lot Owners Association which (i) supplemented and augmented local public services and (ii) through private security services reduced local crime, this would likely make the area popular. Investigations into and proposals on these prospects are therefore recommended. Indeed a successful Lot Owners Association in the area could serve as a beacon of hope for those in surrounding areas as to what might be possible.

Finally, given the atmosphere of apparent alienation of many adjacent residents from local authorities (and possibly also built environment professionals), it may be advisable for the Municipality to initiate a well-conceived public liaison strategy with the residents there. In the absence of this, developments which might otherwise be important contributors to the challenged municipal Rates base could be further misinterpreted, and become inadvertent targets of a more generalised *anomie*. The administration of EIA processes needs to be relieved of such possible burdens.



**Dr JJ McCarthy**

**16 February 2012**



## Annexure 1

### MARITZBURG EAST OPINION SURVEY

Hi my name is Lungisani Mkhize and I am a Masters in Town Planning student trying to understand what it is that people recognise and value in neighbourhoods that they are familiar with. I just need six minutes of your time to assist my studies in this regard. There are no wrong or right answers to any questions here. It's all about your own, personal understandings of places. But I don't need your name or personal contact details.

Apart from this neighbourhood you are in, what three other areas in the Pietermaritzburg region are you familiar with?

This one: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

No.2 \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

No. 3 \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

No. 4 \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

Now I would like you to choose three of these, in which two may be similar from your point of view, and distinctive from the other third one.

Which two are similar? \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_; and in what ways are they similar? \_\_\_\_\_ (i); and which is the third, different one? \_\_\_\_\_; and in what way is it different from the other two? \_\_\_\_\_ (ii)

Let's have another go now with another different mix of three. Which two are similar? \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_; and in what way are they similar? \_\_\_\_\_ (iii); and which is the third, different one? \_\_\_\_\_; and in what way is it different from the other two? \_\_\_\_\_ (iv)

Let's now have one final shot at this: You can use any of the four neighbourhoods again of course if you want. I'm just trying to understand how – or in what ways - you see neighbourhoods as being similar and different. Let's think of some other criteria of similarity and difference. Which two neighbourhoods are now similar in some way? \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_. In what way are they similar? \_\_\_\_\_ (v) And which third neighbourhood is different from those two in that way? \_\_\_\_\_. And in what way does it differ? \_\_\_\_\_ (vi)

Thank you, you have now given me six ways in which you see neighbourhoods as being similar and different to each other in Maritzburg [read out (i) to (vi)]. Now can you tell me, which of these factors are the most important to you personally, as places you would like to either live

in or be close to? Can you please rank your top three neighbourhood qualities or features for me, in order?

FEATURE	My Area	Areas around it
1. _____	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
2. _____	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
3. _____	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5

Finally if you take your area, and the areas around it now, how would you rate them on these features? Circle the score which is the most fair measure of performance for that feature. (1= very good, 5 = very poor; 3=OK)

Thank you and have a nice day. We hope to feed this information into the planning of areas around here.