

Environmental Impacts Screening Decision

A&S General Contractors

Project location and components



The Gorchum Housing Scheme Development project is situated along the new East Coast Public Road that extends east from the Mahaica bridge all the way to the old road (market bypass) intersection with an area of 177 acres. It is estimated that approximately 700 house lots will be available within the community under preparation. The area has a 'right angle triangular' shape whose topography is flat consisting predominantly clay soils that earlier contained vegetation mainly coconut trees and sparse secondary successors flora species. The flat area will be elevated to reduce the possible occurrence of seasonal flooding during periods of persistent heavy rainfall. The drainage system developed will also support channelling flow within the site and along its perimeter. The surrounding area has some residential settlements, poultry and rice cultivation activities and abandoned lands. The area utilised was earlier established as an Old Coconut Estate and the land is highly disturbed and contained beds and drains that are associated with the land use of farmland cultivation. There are no known threatened or endangered species within the area. Works comprise of cutting top soil and stockpiling materials; de-watering and excavation of existing internal drainage systems; creation of access to transport and store excavated materials to designated location on site; shaping of land to required elevation; construction of concrete culverts; preparation of internal roadways and accesses and drains.

Environmental impact screening

The EPA's screening concludes that there are no identifiable significant environmental impacts nor is the project deemed environmentally sensitive. Impacts arising from the construction and operational phases of the project are minor, localized, and acceptable, and an EMP will be prepared providing measures to avoid, prevent and mitigate impacts during the construction and operation.

- **AIR QUALITY, DUST AND NOISE**
The main environmental impacts anticipated are anticipated to be minor noise nuisance and particulate matter emission. These impacts are primarily during construction and controllable. They are expected to be localised and short-termed.
- **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**
It is anticipated that during works there will be some level of periodic change in traffic flow along the roadway leading to the entrance/exit of the construction zones. A site-specific Temporary Traffic Control Plan (TTCP) to address traffic and accident risk during construction activities will be developed and implemented. The TTCP will be inclusive of traffic and warning signs, barricades, and other traffic control devices necessary for the maintenance of traffic along the road corridor.
- **WASTE MANAGEMENT**
Some activities will generate waste which if mismanaged, can lead to secondary sources of pollution, contamination of soil and water, and affect the aesthetic of the area. Impacts from waste generation will be low to moderate and primarily during construction and short term and localized.
- **WATER QUALITY**
The surface water quality can become contaminated or affected from potential threats such as fuel lubricant/oil spills, sediment deposition and blockage of existing drainage system from erosion and sedimentation. These impacts will be low to moderate and primarily during construction and short term and localized. River bank stabilization and revetment of drains from the project will have a positive impact.
- **ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY**
The proposed project is not in close vicinity of any protected areas. However, the Mahaica river fringes south of the location. Project activities will have low to minor effects on the existing ecological or biological (flora or fauna) biodiversity of the river during construction which will be short term and measures exist to avoid, prevent and/or mitigate. Impacts on the environment due to subsequent increased short-lived sedimentation will have a neutral to low impact on the River fauna and flora due to the area being subjected to inter tidal turbidity and sedimentation.
- **SOCIAL BENEFITS**
A well organised setting with modern amenities will propel socio-economic and environmental benefits in a rural community. Due diligence and proactive management of all pre-construction, construction and operational activities will ensure limited disturbance to the daily business activities undertaken within the project area, and surrounding business and community activities.

Conclusion and recommendations

The preparation of a pre-construction, construction and operational EMP will be required to manage environmental impacts arising from the project along with a corresponding schedule and monitoring of mitigation measures to ensure potential impacts are maintained at insignificant levels. It must also include the institutional arrangements for implementing and monitoring the EMP to ensure its effectiveness.

The EPA concludes that there are no significant impacts nor is the project deemed environmentally sensitive. Impacts arising from the construction and operational phases of the project are minor, localized, and acceptable. The proposed housing scheme will provide improved environmental and economic service facilities to the communities and the nation in general.