



BELASTINGSBETALERSVERENIGING

**HERMANUS**

RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

## **FIRST THURSDAY ENGAGEMENT WITH WESTERN CAPE PREMIER ALAN WINDE 4 MAY 2023**

The only issue which the HRA wishes to put on the table with the Premier is the proposed BYPASS which the provincial department of Mobility wishes to put through the heart of residential Hermanus.

This is a broad brush timeline of what has taken place.

The proposal has its genesis in 2008 on the basis of a request from the director of Infrastructure and Planning at the Overstrand Municipality (OM) Mr Stephen Muller to the provincial department to undertake a study on the feasibility of constructing a BYPASS which would divert traffic from the R43 which then ran through the Hermanus CBD.

*This request was made without the knowledge or consent of either the Council or the general public.*

Following further correspondence over a protracted period between Muller and officials at the province a consortium of construction firms known as the EFG-ICE was appointed who created a joint venture in anticipation of involvement with the project. The joint venture appointed SRK environmental consultants in August of 2012 to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

This EIA process has been through a number of iterations and appears to have generated a life of its own as witnessed by the innumerable extensions granted by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEADP). At each iteration SRK has been afforded a further opportunity to remedy the perceived deficiencies in what is perceived to be an agenda of “keep at it until you get it right”.

In 2015 when the EIA was made public in Hermanus it created an outburst of public opinion never seen before. 500 people attended a meeting at the municipal auditorium to express their opposition to the proposed BYPASS. At the heart of the opposition lie 5 main issues.

- **Firstly** the project is flawed in terms of existing transport legislation and this is articulated in the submission by Bob Stanway in his response to the initial public participation process.
- **Secondly** there is no clearly demonstrated need for a BYPASS based on the traffic study and given the available alternatives.

- **Thirdly** there is no desire on the part of the residents of Hermanus to see a provincial trunk road running through the environmentally sensitive residential heart of our town, past schools and over a wetland.
- **Fourthly** the BYPASS is planned to plough its way through Fernkloof Nature Reserve which is home to some of the most sensitive and diverse stretches of Fynbos in the entire country.
- **Fifthly** is the fact that a number of Well Heads upon which Hermanus depends for its water supply lie directly in its path.

This road will destroy the character of suburban Hermanus.

The only beneficiaries of this proposal are motorists who would save a few minutes on their journeys through the town and the Joint Venture who would make their millions. Hermanus is a destination, not a thoroughfare

In the intervening years opposition has not dissipated. We remain as resolutely opposed as before.

On the basis of a lack of disclosure regarding the costs associated with the project a PAIA application was made in 2021 which revealed some of what had been spent to date. This amounted to R11,665,250 up to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Who knows what the total is some two years later?

Notwithstanding the constant focus of attention by the citizenry of Hermanus on the BYPASS issue and criticism regarding its undesirability the then municipal manager irregularly issued a memorandum to the province in August 2019 stating the OM's support of the BYPASS proposal. This letter of support has subsequently been withdrawn as it carried no approval from Council. In fact Council is on record expressing its opposition to the BYPASS.

Since 2021 the Hermanus Ratepayers Association has entered into correspondence with various individuals at the province which culminated in a letter from Colleen Smart in which she indicated that although not currently on the priority list the BYPASS still forms part of provincial plans once other more urgent issues have been dealt with. She states that it is the province's prerogative to proceed with projects as and when it deems fit. Of further concern to the HRA is a process currently underway to amend provincial transport legislation which will give the province wide ranging powers over transport issues at the cost and disadvantage of local municipalities.

The bottom line is that Hermanus does not want and does not need a BYPASS being carved through the heart of our town. Not now and not ever. There is a very real prospect of residents engaging in endless litigation should the BYPASS project proceed.

In a certain sense there is a choice between having the BYPASS or having a DA led council. Respectfully, the choice is yours.

Please do the right thing and cancel this project.

Brian Wridgway  
 Chairman  
 Hermanus Ratepayers Association  
 3 May 2023