

Dear Nature's Valley Property Owner

24 February 2020

Special Urgent Notice

COMMENT ON SECOND DRAFT BITOU MUNICIPAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (SDF)

The 9th January edition of "What's New in Plett", contained a call by Bitou Municipality for public comment on the Second Draft Bitou Spatial Development Framework (Bitou SDF). The published request for comment is attached for information.

All NV property owners as well as interested and affected parties who do not necessarily own property are entitled and strongly encouraged, to make comment on the proposed revision to the SDF documents.

The following background is relevant:

1. The Bitou SDF is a document that outlines future spatial development in the Bitou Municipal area and is a very important guideline for future land use and development within municipal boundaries.
2. In 2018 the first draft Bitou SDF, which included the amended Nature's Valley Local Spatial Development Framework (NV LSDF) went through a final required public participation process, before being tabled for Bitou Council approval in June 2019.
3. Despite the rigorous processes that had been followed and amendments made, objection was raised in Council to the imminent approval of these documents apparently on the grounds that the issue of land transformation and integration has not been adequately addressed.
4. This resulted in changes being made to the Second Draft SDF document in which "unused municipally owned land, specifically public open spaces, have now been designated as **"potential Strategic Development Areas" for the purpose of future development**. The following NV public open spaces and municipal erven have been identified for future "strategic development".
Erf 460 St Andrews (Fynbos Reserve)
Erf 429 St Patricks (Phyl Martin Park)
Erf 380 Forest Drive, Wetland Reserve (Padda Puddle)
Erf 381 Forest Drive, Forest Reserve (The Dell)
Erf 335 and 336 Forest Drive (service erven adjacent to the WTS on 337)
5. **The NVRA are of the opinion that for social, environmental and infrastructure reasons these erven should not be developed in any way and that their current status and zoning as Public Open Spaces should be retained and protected.** A court interdict obtained by the NVRA in 2008 prevents the municipality from utilising erven 335 and 336 for anything other than municipal services.
6. The proposed intention to develop the existing public open spaces is a serious concern, particularly as the intentions of the municipality are vague in the extreme. It is difficult to

accept “potential Strategic Development” as an acceptable plan for the future of these open spaces which have been maintained and well utilised by the community since township establishment in 1953. The existence of public open space within urban areas is a cornerstone of successful town planning. Any new township being planned will always include public open spaces and parks. Sadly, in many towns, municipalities have failed to care for such spaces and their value to the community is lost. In NV these spaces have been cared for by the community to ensure they continue to be utilised for the pleasure and environmental education of owners, tourists and visitors from local communities. This has been clearly set out in the 2018 Bitou SDF and the NV LSDF and is accordance with the wishes of the NV community.

7. Based on recent discussions with senior Bitou officials, the NVRA believe that these public open spaces are once again under threat of alienation and subsequent development contrary to the established single residential status of the township and the environmental integrity of the open spaces.
8. The changes to the draft of the Bitou SDF which is currently open for public comment states that the proposal to designate the NV open spaces as Strategic Development Areas, is in accordance with the terms of a 2008 Council Resolution. Written requests for exact information, wording and validity of such a resolution have met with no response. Due to time constraints, the NVRA are unable to provide any information on this contentious issue.

In order to assist with your response to the Municipality you are asked to please read the important extract from the 2018 NV LSDF concerning NV public open spaces and infrastructure limitations, which is **attached for your ease of reference**.

The DEADLINE for written comments is: Friday 10th March 2020.

If you agree with the stance taken by the NVRA and as spelt out in the extract from the NV LSDF, your support is imperative in voicing your concerns without delay. Your letter can be short and to the point.

All comments must be in writing and e-mailed to:

Spatial Planner

Mr. Marcel Minne

mminne@plett.gov.za

Tel enquiries: 044 501 3319, Mr Minne

Letter to be headed: **Comments on Second Draft Bitou Spatial Development Framework**

Supply full name, Nature’s Valley property address (if applicable) and incl. a contact telephone no.

Please share this information with family, relatives and friends who know and love Nature’s Valley. Request their support in preventing the open spaces from being developed. Such development, should it be allowed to take place, is unlikely to in keeping with existing character and ambience of Natures Valley.

The more responses that are sent off, opposing this vague and ad hoc “planning” by Bitou Municipality, the greater our chances of success.

Yours sincerely,



pp **Dave Owen**

Chairman, NVRA