

George Integrated Public Transport network

Thank you to all of you who provided input regarding the IPTN. There was general support for the concept, although specific concerns were raised. We submitted a summary of these concerns to the consultants and have requested a meeting with them so that we can arrive at the best solution to the problems identified. The following is an abbreviated summary of our submission (If you would like the full submission, please contact Marie Callanan):

“In the first instance we are very positive about the proposed bus service to Wilderness and the surrounding towns and suburbs, as this should be a huge asset to the area.

... a few concerns that we do have relating to this service, namely:

1. Wilderness Transfer Point.

We are absolutely opposed to the positioning of the transfer point for the bus service outside the old Karos hotel opposite the Wilderness Common (bus stop 512). There are three other locations that are close to the centre of the village that should be considered as alternatives namely:

The area immediately to the north of the old Wilderness station. This would be the ideal location as the property is owned by Transnet and there should consequently be no problem about using it.

The SANParks parking area alongside the Touw River Mouth. SANParks would have to agree to the proposal and changes would have to be made to accommodate the terminus but these should not be insurmountable. The piece of vacant land between George Street and Milkwood Village at the entrance to Wilderness. This would entail filling in the existing watercourse, which would create adequate space for an off road terminus.

2. Interchange at the junction of the N2 and the Hoekwil Road.

This is a very dangerous intersection and if, as it appears, passengers will need to change from the C24 bus to the C54 bus here, consideration should be given to rather locating this stop a few hundred metres further down the N2 at the Caltex garage. SANRAL will shortly be constructing a traffic island at this intersection which will facilitate access to the area.

3. The proposed use of Whites Road for the C52 service to the Heights.

Whites Road is totally unsuitable for a bus route to the Heights. The proposed bus route to the Heights should therefore run via Leila's Lane and Heights Road.

3. Wilderness East

The majority of the roads along the proposed routes in the Wilderness East area are essentially not suitable for two-way traffic as they are too narrow and possible alternatives need to be investigated. Some WRRRA members living in the area have suggested that the bus route remains on the N2 and consideration be given to creating walkways from the N2 to 1st/3rd and 7th avenues to facilitate access.

4. General positioning of bus stops in residential areas.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that no stops are located too close to intersections e.g. Route C54 Groenvlei Road. We have had comments from residents living in Kingfisher Close that positioning a bus stop here will increase the hazards of exiting from Kingfisher Close. “

Following a meeting with Harold Basson and other municipal officials at which the GIPT was discussed, the following points were made:

- The GIPT will involve not only providing the bus services, but also upgrading the road infrastructure where this is required by the GIPT. This is an additional, positive, aspect of this program, and should see substantial improvements to the road infrastructure in Wilderness Village and surrounds.

- There should be a positive impact on tourism: residents of George and tourists staying in

George would be able to board a bus, travel to Wilderness for the day or for an evening meal, and return safely. This will make Wilderness more accessible and more attractive to tourists, and in turn will make access to George easier for Wilderness residents.

- It is highly likely that the area outside the old Karos Hotel will be used as the Wilderness Transfer Point, at least initially, since the other proposed sites will take considerably longer to establish, given that they involve other land owners. The aim at this stage is to have the service operating by early 2014.

ONTBYT MET MUNISIPALE AMPTENARE
 Die Wilderness Belastingbetalers en Inwoners Vereeniging se Uitvoerende Komitee het 'n werksontbyt saam met senior amptenare van die George Munisipaliteit op 28 Mei bygewoon. Die geleentheid is by Serendipity gastehuis gehou en is gedeeltelik deur die eienaars, Phillip en Elsebe Kuypers, geborg. Dit was 'n baie produktiewe vergadering, veral in terme van die stigting van goeie werksverhoudings met die amptenare teenwoordig. Daar is gesamentlik besluit om soortgelyke vergaderings op 'n gereelde basis in die toekoms te hou.

BREAKFAST WITH MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

The WRRRA Executive Committee held a working breakfast with senior officials of the George Municipality on 28 May. The event was held at Serendipity and was generously sponsored in part by the owners, Phillip and Elsebe Kuypers. This proved to be a very productive meeting in terms of establishing good relations with the officials present, and it was decided that similar meetings would be held on a regular basis.

TOWN OF THE YEAR - DOWN, BUT NOT OUT!

With the winner of the second phase of the Kwela Town of the Year competition being announced on 29 May, Wilderness lost an extremely close fought battle against Paarl for the Western Cape regional finalist position. It would appear that a mere handful of votes separated the two towns. We wish to congratulate Paarl on its success, and we wish them well in their bid to become the 2013, Kyknet, Kwela Dorp van die Jaar.

WRRRA would like to thank the organizing team – Trevor White, Donald Goldfain and Marlene Viljoen – as well as the many WRRRA members who cast their votes for our own lovely town. It should be noted that Paarl has a population of approximately 350 000, while Wilderness has only in the region of 15 000. We submitted approximately 16 000 votes in both first and second round, which means that we had one vote per resident – a great achievement. While hesitant to name specific entities and individuals who put their weight behind the Wilderness challenge, the following persons did go the extra mile and need to be mentioned:

- ♣ Frida from Cocomo Restaurant
- ♣ Massimo from Salinas Restaurant
- ♣ Jacques from the Wild News
- ♣ Chris from Eden Adventures
- ♣ Deon from SA Paragliding Adventures
- ♣ Lorraine from Pam Golding

WRRRA, as the initiators of the Wilderness entry, would like to emphasize that although we didn't manage to clinch the regional winner's spot, there were nevertheless many positives that flowed from our entry:

- ♣ A renewed sense of camaraderie and pride in our town
- ♣ The creation of a new website as the portal for the Wilderness Experience
- ♣ A bringing together of the community, business and the tourism authorities
- ♣ A sense of vision emerged for what can be achieved if all parties work together
- ♣ A platform was created to publicize aspects of the Wilderness Improvement Project
- ♣ We discovered many interesting people and activities that are not well known, but which have enormous potential for future community and tourism activities
- ♣ We obtained some limited TV exposure for Wilderness
- ♣ We have gained valuable experience for next year's entry!

PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL OKTOBER BEER FESTIVAL

Some of you may be aware of the proposal by a group of event organizers, comprising SABMiller Ltd, Deutsches Haus, the HHK Group and the City Council of George, to stage a Beer Festival in Wilderness between 31 October and 3 November 2013. The Festival would run from 10am to 12pm daily, and include a traditional performing German Band from Munich, various local artists, a Youth Brass Ensemble and Cape Minstrel Group from Cape Town.

The proposal is that the Festival would take place on the Village Green and the SANParks area alongside the lagoon. There will be a beer tent and beer garden, food stalls, an amusement park with carousel, and a craft market as part of the Festival.

This is the first notification that WRRRA has had of this proposal, and before providing any official comment or input, we need to hear the views of our members.

Please email your comments, questions or suggestions to wrra@tiscali.co.za.

WILDERNESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

♣ Signage in the Village

The indiscriminate erection of advertising and directional signage in the village has been a cause of ongoing concern. A letter has now been sent to Mr S Erasmus, the Head of the Planning Department, requesting details as to who is responsible for ensuring that all signage is approved, and for removing the illegal signage that is already in place. We hope that progress on this issue will result in a greater measure of uniformity and do away with the clutter of signs that currently detracts from the village atmosphere.

♣ Village Monitor Project

This very successful pilot project, initiated by WRRRA and financially supported by George Municipality, the local business community and WRRRA, reaches the end of the pilot phase in July. The feedback on this project has been exceptionally positive, and suggestions from the business community have enabled it to be even more effective. There has been a significant impact on the climate in the Village, and the unnecessary harassment of locals and visitors is a thing of the past. This project is now being taken over by the Greater Wilderness Business Initiative (GWBI), and they will endeavor to ensure that it is adequately funded in order to be sustainable in the longer term.

♣ Keep Wilderness Clean Campaign

The first of the new refuse bins for the Village were handed over to the WRRRA on 3 June at the SANParks facility at Farleigh. This facility has been developed to utilize alien vegetation, cleared as part of the "Working for Water" program, in the production of items such as school desks and outdoor furniture for Government Departments and for SANParks. It is not a commercial facility, and products are not generally available to the public. WRRRA was able to have the refuse bins manufactured thanks to the good offices of Jill Bunding-Venter and the team at Farleigh, who sponsored the first 4 bins. An additional 8 bins are on order, and these have all been sponsored. They will be a very welcome addition to the Village, and will assist the Village Monitors in keeping the area clean and tidy, and educating residents and visitors in this regard.

Hou Wilderness Skoon Veldtog

Die eerste van die nuwe spesiaal ontwerpde vullishouers vir die Dorp, is op 3 Junie deur SANParke by hulle fabriek op Farleigh, aan ons oorhandig. Hierdie fasiliteit is ontwikkel om uitheemse en indringer plante, wat as deel van die "Werk vir Water" program uitgehaal word, ekonomies aan te wend. Meubels en ander produkte wat in hierdie fabriek vervaardig word, is in die algemeen, nie vir die publiek beskikbaar nie, maar met die hulp van Jill Bunding-Venter, het die span by Farleigh ons n guns bewys en die vullisdromme op kort kennisgewing vervaardig. Daarbenewens, het SANParke ook die vier vullishouers, as deel van hulle bydrae tot die Wilderness Verbeteringsprogram, aan ons dorpie geskenk. n' Bykomende 8 vullisblikke

is op bestelling, en weereens het een van ons inwoners aangebied om die vervaardiging en vervoer daarvan te borg. Ons is baie dankbaar vir hierdie bydraes en sien die vullishouers as n welkome toevoeging tot die Dorp se verbetering.