

New dump site earmarked

- District offers to buy undisclosed new site
- Closing dump will cost City R78 million

An aerial view of the extent of the fire ravaging the New England landfill site. **PHOTO: MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY**

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UMGUNGUNDLOVU District is in talks to buy land for a regional landfill site amid plans to close down Pietermaritzburg's perennially problematic dump in New England Road.

However, closing the current dump, which would include its rehabilitation, could cost Msunduzi more than R78 million.

The city has been engulfed in smoke since the weekend due to a fire at the dump that teams of fire-fighters have been battling to bring under control in scorching weather.

Yesterday, district manager Ray Ngcobo said uMgungundlovu was very concerned about the state of the current landfill.

"Much as we have an abnormal situation where waste management is performed by a local municipality instead of the district, as observed by the AG [auditor-general] previously, studies have been conducted by the district to

look at the alternative future site," Ngcobo said.

He said various sites had potential and they would continue with their investigations because the current landfill site needed to be closed down.

"It is important that we resolve this matter urgently and create sustainable futures for our region."

He said uMgungundlovu had identified land that is privately owned and negotiations with the owners have started.

"Should the negotiations for intention to procure become successful, the municipality will source that land for waste management initiatives, which will reduce items that can be recycled going to the present landfill site.

"This will also assist in preventing the pollution that we have just experienced," he said.

Ngcobo would not reveal where the site under negotiation is located, except to say that the first choice is near Mkhambathi, in Camperdown, "given

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DISTRICT TO TAKE OVER FROM MSUNDUZI

CONSTITUTIONALLY, the mandate for environmental health, including landfilling, across uMgungundlovu belongs to the district municipality.

The fact that Msunduzi is providing this service within its borders has a "non-compliance" audit query for the district. In July uMgungund-

lovu resolved that the district should start the process of taking over all environmental health functions from Msunduzi, but the process is expected to take years to complete.

The cash-strapped district is also losing out on revenue that it could

be generating for issuing licences related to environmental health and fining those who flout the by-laws within Msunduzi's borders.

In the meantime, the municipalities have agreed to sign a service level agreement, which is a first step towards compliance. — WR.

accessibility from the freeway".

However, there were also options in New Hanover in uMshwathi, and towards Richmond, he said.

"In all instances, cost-benefit analysis must demonstrate economic opportunities on the system of waste management through recycling, power generation and gas processing," he said.

However, the establishment of a new site could take years as the district would have to conduct several assessments, including an environmental impact audit, in order to get its waste management licence.

Meanwhile, Msunduzi seems to have already started looking into the possibility of closing the current dump, which is reportedly about four years away from exhausting its lifespan.

According to a June assessment report by One Pangaea Financial that is yet to come before council, the City must be prepared to spend more than R78 million on the rehabilitation and closure of the dump.

This would include compacting waste, storm water management, planting vegetation to prevent erosion and infrastructure maintenance. There must also be post-closure maintenance, which includes fire control and the upkeep of the vegetation.

One Pangaea Financial also recommended the management of the waste-pickers in terms of formalising their operations and ensuring that they had tools to work.

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DID YOU KNOW?

- The New England Road landfill site spans over 44 hectares.
- It has been operating since the 1980s but only got its licence in 1993.
- It generates more than R500 000 in revenue for the City every month.
- It has a staff complement of 22 employees but some of the senior posts are vacant.
- It is a regional facility and receives waste from as far afield as Greytown and Bergville.