

5.12 NELSPOORT (population: $\pm 1\ 600$)

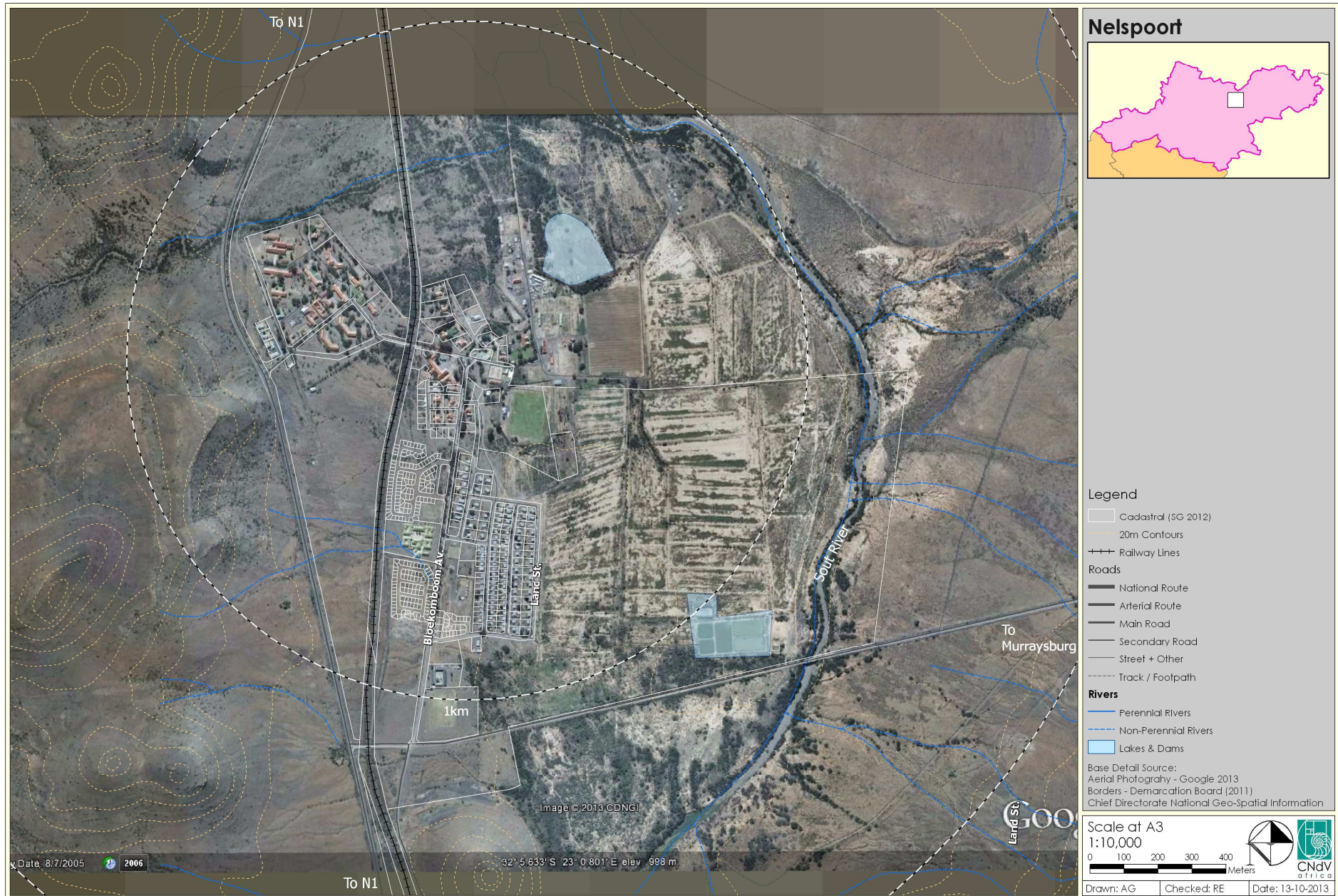


Figure 5.12.1.1 Nelspoort: Aerial photograph

5.12.1 SPATIAL ANALYSIS, see Figures 5.12.1.2

Sub-regional location

- Located on the old N1 that deviates from the current route following the Cape Town- Gauteng rail line;
- 50kms from Beaufort West, 520kms from Cape Town and 880kms from Johannesburg;
- Original locational determinants included the very clean air in this region (tuberculosis convalescence centre before cure was discovered in late 1950s) and presence of road and rail station (2kms south) on mainline;
- Although the attributes of the site were identified in 1880 the centre only opened in 1924 after a large donation from the Garlick family; and,
- It was also very good farming country with the area being less drought prone than areas further to the south. The Sout River and surrounding veld is certainly in much better conditions here than it is to the south.

Layout pattern

- Comprises four components:
 - Original sanatorium complex between rail line and road linked to remainder of settlement by a road underpass taking direct access off old N1 ;
 - Recreation, management housing and community facility node around a T-junction;
 - Farm buildings and agricultural lands to the east;
 - Residential areas and schools abutting a long avenue comprising mature blue gum trees. It comprises the original settlement plus two recently completely BNG housing schemes. This area also takes access off the old N1 via a level crossing; and,
- There is also a small community living in houses around the station some 2kms to the south.

Urban quality

- The original institutional buildings were constructed on a grand scale facing north/north east in the Edwardian colonial style with large wrap around verandahs well suited to the Karoo heat in summer and prominent chimneys arising out of large double pitched roofs;
- The older parts of the settlement are well treed and the main spine avenue creates a strong sense of place with its boulevard of mature gum trees;
- Original staff housing takes the form of small cottages with chimneys; and,
- Recently built BNG housing lack tree planting and detracts from the architectural integrity of the rest of the buildings.

Challenges and potential

- With the scaling down of the heath and farming activities the population is likely to be mainly economically sustained by social grants;
- Although the many Blue Gum trees in the settlement give it an oasis like sense of place these damage infrastructure and soak up large volumes of water;
- Nelspoort is becoming a settlement refuge for farmworkers displaced from surrounding farms;
- There are many large buildings, increasingly falling into disrepair, which could be used for institutional purposes. (Originally facilities for \pm 500 patients plus staff) There is a great need for training and rehabilitation facilities in the province to address various social issues which require candidates to spend some time out of their current context, for example, like the Chrysalis Academy in Cape Town. Nelspoort would appear to be best suited for such a role as it already has the necessary facilities for this including buildings and facilities and agricultural land – although many of these are currently little used and/or are in disrepair; and,
- There are a large number of developed agricultural lands currently lying fallow which should be brought into production.



Main Entrance to Nelspoort off old N1



Example of numerous well built but little used institutional buildings on site requiring maintenance



Recently constructed BNG housing



Figure 5.12.1.2 Nelspoort: Analysis

5.12.2 NELSPOORT: DRAFT SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, see Figure 5.12.2.1

General: Although the hospital was once a national facility currently it only serves the Central Karoo District for TB patients and psychiatry patients and is managed by a Matron.

Nelspoort has four assets to build on:

- The health facilities and institutional buildings ,although many are in a poor state of repair and under used, have potential as a large heritage precinct;
- Excellent climate;
- Relatively good agricultural land which is also currently underutilized; and,
- Remote location which nevertheless is served by good road and rail infrastructure not too far from the N1.

This suggests that, in addition to the proposed hospital extension program underway (noted in IDP 2007-2012) it would be a good location for a large leadership academy/rehabilitation centre that could address the various social problems increasingly affecting communities in the large cities as well as the platteland. The sub-regional location makes the settlement suitable for offering tourist opportunities that could include the Khoi and Bushman history of the area (rock bells, paintings and engravings) Anglo Boer War as well as the sanatorium's history. The farming operations should be restored and this could also form the basis of a local value chain via an on-site farmers market and supplying Beaufort West.

5.12.2.1 Core landscape areas

- Nelspoort should retain its heavily treed character which forms a strong part of its sense of place but begin to replace the current Blue Gum trees with suitable indigenous water wise species; and,
- Restore farming to the large area of prepared lands currently lying fallow.

5.12.2.2 Urban Development

- The settlement is exceptionally well endowed with various education and community facilities and all that is generally required is their restoration rather than the construction of new facilities; and,
- In general no new housing should be provided for as a large number of units have been recently built, there is suitable land if needed along the main entrance road and the short to medium term focus should be on promoting economic activity and job creation rather than more residential opportunities.

5.12.2.3 Heritage Areas

- The northern part of the settlement should be restored as a heritage precinct. This could be coupled with history tours through the hospital grounds and farming area and a coffee shop and B&B facilities operating somewhere out of the large stock of currently underused buildings.

5.12.2.4 Urban Restructuring

- Create continuous link avenue between the two main entrances to the settlement including the hospital, facilities and residential areas; and,
- All gateways into town should be enhanced to improve its sense of arrival.



Replace existing blue gums with indigenous trees on a phased basis so as to retain visual quality



Restore heritage buildings to their original use as well as to serve as tourism attraction (walking tours)



Bring agricultural land to full production

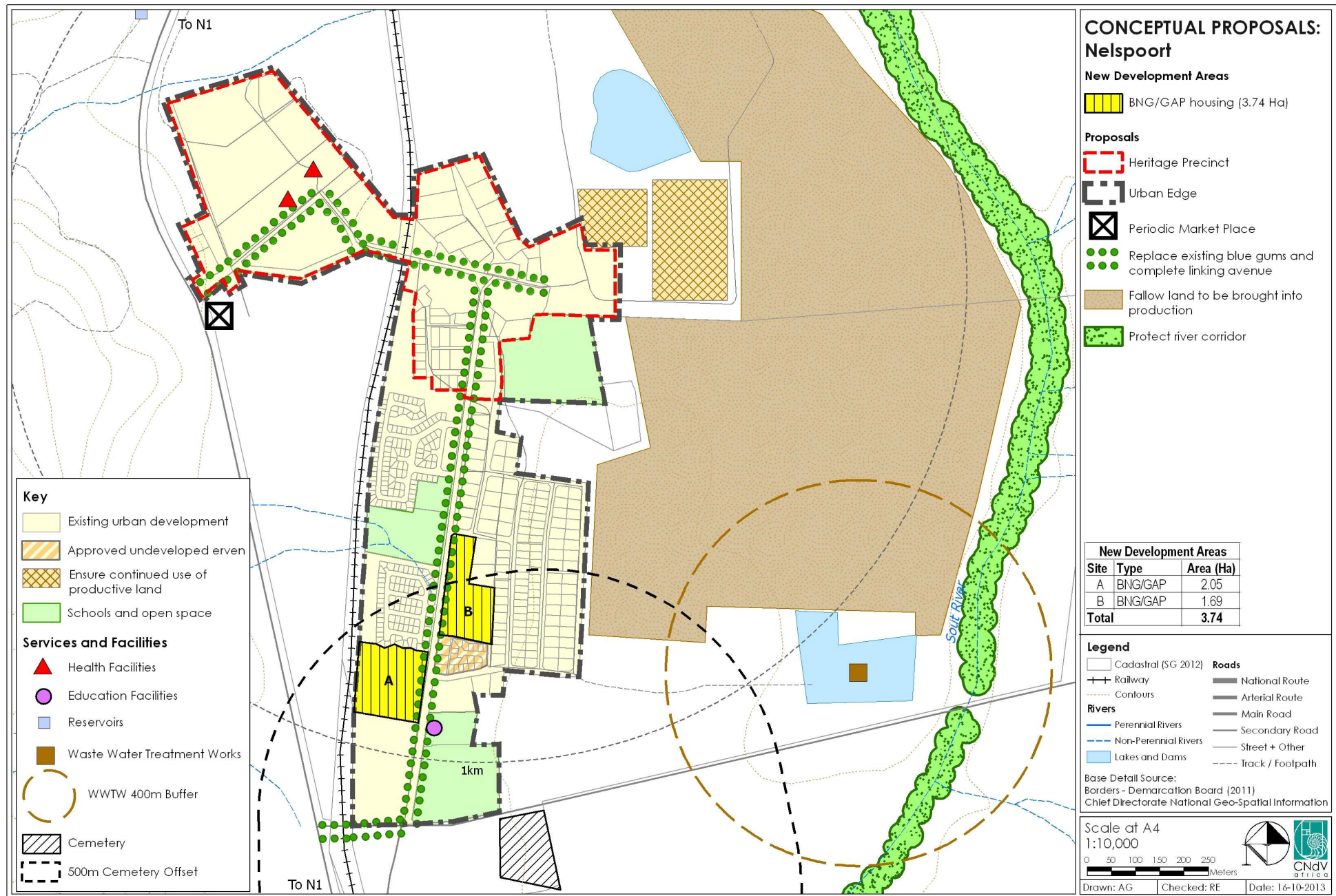


Figure 5.12.2.1 Nelspoort: Spatial Development Framework

