



THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

SDF REVIEW CLOSE OUT REPORT

2026

FINAL TLMSDF REVIEW





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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYM

APAP	AGRICULTURAL POLICY ACTION PLAN
BNG	BREAKING NEW GROUND
BRT	BUS RAPID TRANSIT
CARA	CONSERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ACT
CASP	COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME
CBA _s	CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS
CBD	CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
CCLM	COLLINS CHABANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
CIF	CAPITAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK
CO	CARBON MONOXIDE
COGHSTA	COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
COGTA	DEPARMENT OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
CRDP	COMPREHENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
DA	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DAFF	DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES
DLRRD	DEPARTMENT OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA
DHS	DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
DMRE	DEPARTMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES

DOE	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DOH	DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DPWRI	DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
DSAC	DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS ARTS AND CULTURE
DSD	DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
DTI	DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
DTCS	DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT & COMMUNITY SERVICES
DWS	DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION
ECA _s	ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AREAS
EIA _s	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
EMF	ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
EMP _s	ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLANS
ESA _s	ECOLOGICAL SUPPORT AREAS
ESKOM	ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMMISSION
GBCSA	GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA
GIS	GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS
GSD	GLOBAL SOLUTION DEVELOPMENT
HDA	HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
HDI _s	HISTORICALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS
IA	INDUSTRIAL AREA
ICT	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY





IDA	INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	MEC	MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES
IDP	INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN	MISA	MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AGENT
IFA	INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT	MLM	MUSINA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
IOSS	INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM	MKLM	MAKHADO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
IPAP	INDUSTRY POLICY ACTION PLAN	MMSEZ	MUSINA-MAKHADO SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE
IPILRA	INTERIM PROTECTION OF INFORMAL LAND RIGHTS	MOSS	MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE SYSTEM
IRO	INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN	MPCC	MULTIPURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRE
ITP	INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PLAN	MPPMR	MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS
IUDF	INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK	MPRDA	MINERAL AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT
IWMP	INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN	MPT	MUNICIPAL PLANNING TRIBUNAL
KPAs	KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS	MSA	MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT
KPIs	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	MSDF	MUNICIPAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
LDP	LIMPOPO DEVELOPMENT PLAN	MTDP	MEDIUM-TERM DEVELOPMENT PLAN
LED	LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	MTSF	MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
LEDET	LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM	NATMAP	NATIONAL TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN
LEMA	LIMPOPO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN	NBRBSA	NATIONAL BUILDING REGULATIONS AND BUILDING STANDARDS ACT
LGEP	LIMPOPO GREEN ECONOMY PLAN	NDP	NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
LM	LOCAL MUNICIPALITY	NDPG	NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP GRANT
LSDF	LIMPOPO SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK	NEAQ	NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AIR QUALITY
LUMS	LAND USE MANAGEMENT SCHEME	NEMA	THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
MDB	MUNICIPAL DERMACATION BOARD	NEMBA	NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BIODIVERSITY ACT





NEMPAA	NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROTECT AREAS ACT	SALGA	SOUTH SFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
NEMWA	NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL WASTE ACT	SDA	STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS
NEPAD	NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT	SDBIP	SERVICE DELIVERY AND BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
NFA	NATIONAL FORESTS ACT	SDF	SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
NHRA	NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT	SDG	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
NMT	NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT	SDPs	SITE DEVELOPMENT PLANS
NIP	NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN	SIPs	STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
NLTA	NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT ACT	SMES	SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES
NSDF	NATIONAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK	SMMes	SMALL MEDIUM AND MICRO ENTERPRISES
NSSA	NATIONAL SPATIAL ACTION AREAS	SANBI	SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY INSTITUTE
NSSD	NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	SANPARKS	SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS
NUSP	NATIONAL UPGRADING SUPPORT PROGRAMME	SANRAL	SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL ROAD AGENCY
NWA	NATIONAL WATER ACT	SOEs	STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES
OTP	OFFICE THE PREMIER	STATS SA	STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA
PAIA	PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION	STAZ	SPECIAL TOURISM AND AGRICULTURAL ZONE
PHSHDA	PRIORITY HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AREAS	STEZ	SPECIAL TOURISM AND ECONOMIC ZONE
PPPs	PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	STATS SA	STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA
PSC	PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE	SPLUMA	SPATIAL PLANNING AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT ACT
PMT	PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM	SWOT	STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS
RBM	RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT	TLGFA	TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK ACT
RR	RURAL REGENERATION	TLM	THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
SACN	SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES NETWORKS		





TLMSDF	THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
TOD	TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT
UISP	UPGRADING OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
ULTRA	UPGRADING OF LAND TENURE RIGHTS ACT
UNIVEN	UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
VAP	VHEMBE ADAPTATION PLAN
VDM	VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
VIP	VENTILATED IMPROVED PIT
VOCs	VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS
VTVET	VHEMBE TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL, EDUCATION AND TRAINING
WEF	WATER ENERGY PLAN
WSA	WATER SERVICES AUTHORITY
WSDP	WATER SERVICES DEVELOPMENT PLAN
WSUD	WATER-SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN
WTP	WATER TREATMENT PLANT





GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessibility: The ease with which people can reach services, facilities, employment opportunities, and other destinations.

Agro-Processing: Transformation of raw agricultural products into finished or semi-finished goods for consumption or further manufacturing.

Agricultural Potential: The capability of land to support agricultural production based on soil, climate, water availability, and topography.

Biodiversity: The variety of living organisms, ecosystems, and ecological processes within a particular area.

Bulk Infrastructure: Major infrastructure systems such as water, sanitation, electricity, and roads that support development.

Catalytic Projects: Large-scale, strategic development projects designed to stimulate economic growth and unlock further investment in an area.

Catchment Area: Area of land where all rainfall flows into a common river, lake, or dam.

Climate Change: Long-term change in average weather patterns (such as temperature, rainfall, and wind) on Earth, mainly caused today by human activities.

Climate Resilience: The ability of communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems to withstand climate-related shocks and stresses.

Conservation Zone: Designated area of land that is protected and managed to preserve natural resources, biodiversity, ecosystems, and environmental quality

Corridor Development: Development concentrated along major transport routes to stimulate economic growth and accessibility.

Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA): Priority natural area that must be protected to ensure that ecosystems, species, and ecological processes remain healthy and sustainable.

Densification: Spatial planning strategy that involves increasing the number of people or buildings within a given urban area by using land more efficiently

Dependency Ratio: The proportion of dependents (children and elderly persons) relative to the working-age population.

Development Corridor: Planned geographic strip of land that connects cities, towns, or economic hubs and is targeted for infrastructure investment and economic development

Development Node: Specific point or area within a region where economic activities, services, and infrastructure are concentrated and encouraged to grow.

Digital Infrastructure: Communication technologies and networks that support digital connectivity and economic development.

Ecological Support Areas (ESA): Natural or semi-natural areas that support and maintain the functioning of Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) and ecosystems

Economic Node: Specific area within a town, city, or region where economic activities are concentrated and actively take place, such as trade, services, industry, and business development.





Economic Diversification: process of broadening the range of economic activities in an area or country so that the economy does not depend on only one sector or industry.

Ecosystem Services: Benefits provided by natural ecosystems, including water purification, flood control, and biodiversity conservation.

Environmental Sensitivity: Degree to which an environment is vulnerable to change, damage, or degradation when exposed to human activities or natural disturbances.

Environmental Management Framework (EMF): A strategic environmental planning tool that guides sustainable development and environmental decision-making.

Floodline: Mapped boundary that shows the area likely to be covered by water during a flood event of a specific size or probability

Gap Housing: Housing for middle-income groups not qualifying for subsidies

Green Economy: Economic activities that improve human well-being while reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcity.

Green Infrastructure: Natural and semi-natural systems that provide environmental services and support sustainable development.

Growth Point: A designated area (usually in rural or developing regions) identified by government for focused investment, infrastructure development, and economic expansion.

Household Size: The average number of persons living within a household.

Human Settlements: Areas where people live, including housing, services, social facilities, and economic opportunities.

Infill Development: Process of building new structures on vacant or underused land within existing urban areas instead of expanding the city outward.

Infrastructure Corridor: Planned linear zone where major infrastructure systems are developed and concentrated to connect regions, cities, and economic areas.

Infrastructure Investment: Capital expenditure directed towards the development or improvement of infrastructure facilities.

Informal Economy: Economic activities that operate outside formal regulatory and taxation systems.

Informal Settlement: Settlement where people live in unplanned housing areas without formal land tenure, proper infrastructure, or basic services approved by government planning authorities.

Investment Attraction: Activities aimed at encouraging public and private sector investment within an area.

Integrated Open Space System: Network of environmentally sensitive and protected areas

Integrated Planning: Coordinated planning that aligns sectoral plans, budgets, policies, and development objectives.

Land Capability: The suitability of land for specific uses based on its physical characteristics.

Land Reform: Government initiatives aimed at addressing historical land ownership inequalities and improving access to land.

Land Use Management: The regulation and control of land development and land-use activities.





Land Use Management Scheme: Legal planning document that sets out rules and regulations for how land can be used and developed within a municipality.

Local Economic Development: Process where local governments, communities, and the private sector work together to improve the local economy and create jobs within a specific area such as a municipality.

Local Service Point: Smaller settlement providing basic services to surrounding communities

Migration: The movement of people from one area to another for permanent or temporary settlement.

Mixed-Use Development: Development that combines residential, commercial, institutional, and recreational land uses within a single area.

Municipal Services: Basic services provided by municipalities, including water, sanitation, electricity, roads, and waste management.

Mobility: The ability of people and goods to move efficiently within and between settlements.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Management process used to track progress and assess the performance of projects, programmes, or policies to ensure that goals are achieved effectively and efficiently.

Municipality: Local government structure responsible for managing and delivering services and development within a defined geographic area such as a city, town, or district.

Municipal Open Space System (MOSS): Network of environmentally sensitive and protected areas

Natural Resource Management: The sustainable management and utilization of natural resources such as water, land, forests, and biodiversity.

Nodal Development: Development focused around strategic centres to improve accessibility and service delivery.

Nodal Point: specific location where movement, activities, services, or transport routes converge and concentrate, making it an important focus of economic and social interaction.

Protected Area: clearly defined geographic space that is legally or formally managed to conserve nature, biodiversity, ecosystems, and cultural heritage.

Public Private Partnership: long-term agreement between government (public sector) and a private company (private sector) to finance, build, operate, or manage public infrastructure or services.

Public Participation: The process through which communities and stakeholders contribute to planning and decision-making.

Reticulation: The system of distributing basic services through a network of infrastructure from a main source to individual users or households.

Rural Development: Programmes and initiatives aimed at improving livelihoods and economic opportunities in rural areas.

Rural Restructuring: Is the planned transformation and reorganisation of rural settlements, land uses, infrastructure systems, and economic activities to create more sustainable, functional, accessible, and economically viable rural areas while improving living conditions and addressing historical spatial inequalities.

Service Delivery: Provision of basic public services and infrastructure by government (especially municipalities) to communities to meet their daily needs and improve quality of life.





Settlement Hierarchy: the ranking or classification of settlements according to their size, population, function, level of services, and economic importance within a region

Settlement Pattern: The way in which buildings, houses, and communities are arranged and distributed over a particular area.

Social Infrastructure: Facilities such as schools, clinics, hospitals, libraries, community halls, and sports facilities that support community well-being.

Spatial Efficiency: How effectively land, infrastructure, and spatial resources are used to support economic, social, and environmental functions within a city or municipality.

Spatial Integration: A planning principle that promotes the physical, social, and economic connectivity of communities, settlements, and regions.

Spatial Justice: A principle of spatial planning that seeks to redress historical inequalities and imbalances in the distribution of land, infrastructure, services, and economic opportunities.

Spatial Transformation: The restructuring of settlement patterns and land-use arrangements to promote equity and sustainability.

Spatial Sustainability: The planning and management of land use and development in a way that ensures long-term environmental health, economic viability, and social well-being without degrading natural resources or limiting the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Spatial Implications: effects or consequences that a policy, project, development, or activity has on the use, organization, and distribution of land, people, services, infrastructure, and resources within a geographic area

Special Economic Zone: Geographically designated area within a country where business and trade laws are different (usually more flexible or incentivised) from the rest of the country to attract investment, industrial development, and job creation.

Special Tourism and Agricultural Zone (STAZ): is a designated area created to promote both tourism and agricultural development in a coordinated way, with the aim of linking agriculture and tourism, two key economic sectors within TLM, so that local farming communities benefit directly from tourism, and tourists experience authentic rural and agri-based attractions.

Special Tourism and Economic Zone (STEZ): An area within TLM that is proposed to be developed and managed with the goal of promoting tourism, investment, and economic growth through special policies and incentives.

Strategic Development Area (SDA): A geographically defined area identified by a municipality for targeted public and private investment, spatial transformation, infrastructure provision, economic development, and coordinated land use management in order to achieve specific long-term development objectives and maximise developmental impact.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Tourism Corridor: Geographic route or network of connected destinations that are developed and promoted to encourage tourism movement, investment, and visitor spending along a specific area.

Tourism Development: Planning and promotion of tourism-related activities and infrastructure to stimulate economic growth.





Traditional Authority: System of local governance led by traditional leaders (such as kings, chiefs, or headmen) who exercise authority over a specific community based on customary law, culture, and long-established traditions.

Traditional Council: Governance structure that supports a traditional leader (such as a chief or king) in managing and administering a traditional community in accordance with customary law and established traditions.

Urbanisation: Process by which an increasing proportion of a population moves from rural areas to towns and cities, leading to the growth and expansion of urban areas.

Urban Edge: Planning boundary that separates urban development areas from rural or undeveloped land.

Urban Regeneration: Process of redeveloping, improving, and revitalising declining urban areas in order to restore economic activity, improve living conditions, and make cities more functional and attractive.

Urban Sprawl: the uncontrolled or unplanned expansion of urban development into surrounding rural or undeveloped land, usually at low densities and over large areas

Value Chain: The sequence of activities involved in producing, processing, marketing, and delivering a product or service

Ward: Geographic area within a municipality represented by an elected ward councillor who acts as a link between the community and the municipal council.

Wetland: Area of land where the soil is permanently or seasonally saturated with water, either at or near the surface.

Zoning: Process of dividing land within a municipality into different areas (zones), each with specific rules on how the land can be used and developed.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Thulamela Local Municipality Spatial Development Framework (TLMSDF) Review 2026 provides the TLM's strategic spatial vision to guide land use management, infrastructure investment, settlement development, environmental protection, and economic growth over the medium to long term planning horizon. Prepared in accordance with the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 16 of 2013), Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000), and aligned with national, provincial, district, and local planning frameworks, the SDF serves as the municipality's primary spatial policy instrument for directing public and private sector investment.

The TLM SDF Review responds to rapid urbanisation, increasing service delivery demands, infrastructure backlogs, environmental pressures, and the need to address historical spatial inequalities that continue to shape settlement patterns across TLM. The municipality remains predominantly rural in character, with most land held under traditional authority systems, creating unique opportunities and challenges for coordinated land development and governance.

From a spatial planning perspective, the SDF identifies the Thohoyandou–Sibasa Provincial Urban Node (urban complex) as the TLM's principal growth node and regional economic hub. The framework promotes a hierarchical settlement structure consisting of provincial urban nodes, regional development anchors, local service centres, and rural settlements. This approach aims to improve accessibility to services, concentrate investment in

strategic growth areas, strengthen economic linkages, and reduce inefficient spatial fragmentation.

A key focus of the SDF is the promotion of integrated urban-rural development. The framework seeks to strengthen rural economies through agricultural development, tourism promotion, local economic development initiatives, and improved infrastructure provision while simultaneously supporting urban regeneration, densification, and more efficient land utilisation within existing urban areas. The proposed urban edge, infill development strategies, and densification policies are intended to curb urban sprawl, optimise infrastructure investment, and support sustainable settlement growth.

The SDF further identifies critical environmental assets that require protection, including biodiversity priority areas, ecological support areas, water resources, wetlands, forests, and high-potential agricultural land. Environmental sustainability and climate resilience are embedded as core planning principles to ensure that future development occurs within environmentally suitable locations while minimising disaster risks and ecological degradation.

Infrastructure provision remains a central development priority. The framework highlights the need for significant investment in water supply, sanitation, roads, electricity, waste management, public transport facilities, housing, social amenities, and economic infrastructure. Through its Capital Investment Framework, the SDF spatially prioritises infrastructure investment to support identified growth nodes, improve service delivery efficiency, and unlock development opportunities across the municipality.





Economically, the SDF seeks to leverage TLM's strategic position within the Vhembe District municipality by strengthening agriculture, tourism, trade, education, government services, and small business development. Special Tourism and Agricultural Zones (STAZs), corridor development initiatives, and strategic development nodes are proposed to stimulate investment, create employment opportunities, and diversify the local economy.

The framework also recognises the importance of collaborative governance between the municipality, traditional authorities, sector departments, private investors, and local communities. Effective implementation will depend on strong institutional coordination, alignment of sector plans, ongoing stakeholder engagement, and the integration of spatial priorities into municipal budgeting and capital expenditure programmes.

In conclusion, the TLMSDF Review 2026 presents a comprehensive spatial development strategy aimed at transforming TLM into a more spatially integrated, economically competitive, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive municipality. The successful implementation of the proposed spatial vision will require sustained investment, coordinated governance, and a disciplined approach to land use management to ensure that future growth supports improved quality of life for all residents while protecting the municipality's valuable natural and cultural resources.



An aerial photograph of a large stadium under construction. The stadium's seating bowl is visible, surrounded by tiered seating areas that are currently just concrete frameworks. Several tall, striped masts are positioned around the stadium. In the background, a residential area with many houses is visible under a hazy sky. The image is framed by large, semi-transparent blue geometric shapes in the corners.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Global Solution Development (Pty) Ltd (hereinafter, referred to as GSD) was appointed in April 2025 to review the Thulamela Local Municipality SDF (hereinafter, referred to as TLM SDF), located in the area of jurisdiction of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. The project duration will be Twelve (12) months. The inception report highlights the broad scope of work and provides a detailed work plan based on the proposed approach applied for the project to ensure completion in 12 months. The report provides guidelines on the processes, monitoring and evaluation procedures to be adhered to by all relevant stakeholders. The acceptance and signing of this document by all relevant stakeholders will form part of the contractual agreement between TLM (TLM) and Global Solution Development (Pty) Ltd.

The flow in urbanisation and increased resource consumption that began in the mid-20th century highlighted the importance of spatial planning to direct the future growth of both urban and rural areas, often using reports and maps. In South Africa, this was formerly managed through Guide Plans, as prescribed by the Physical Planning Act (Act 125 of 1991), and structure plans that were shaped by discriminatory principles and policies of separate development. After the end of apartheid in 1994, the newly elected democratic government established a reformed spatial planning system. According to the South African Cities Network (SACN, 2015), the introduction of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), Act 16 of 2013, aimed to support more coordinated, effective and equitable planning and land use practices.

The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (Act 16 of 2013) (SPLUMA), delivers a framework for spatial planning and land use management in South Africa. The SDF can be seen as an indicative plan showing the envisaged spatial forms, direction of growth, micro-spatial/precinct plan for the core areas, conservation-worthy areas and nodal areas for the development of infrastructure and social service. The SDF needs to be informed by the vision of the municipal area, the development objectives, as well as the strategies and outputs identified. According to the SPLUMA (2013), each sphere of government must take responsibility for spatial planning in their jurisdiction. In this regard the local municipality being the sphere of government operating closest to the community will have a direct role to play in spatial planning on which all decisions on land development should be based. The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, Act 16 of 2013 (SPLUMA) stipulates the role of a local municipality relating to spatial planning and land use management on the following elements found in section 5(1):

- ✚ The compilation, approval and review of integrated development plans,
- ✚ The compilation, approval and review of the components of an integrated development plan prescribed by legislation and falling within the competence of a municipality, including a SDF and a Land Use Scheme, and
- ✚ The control and regulation of the use of land within the municipal area where the nature, scale and intensity of the land use does not affect





the provincial planning mandate of provincial government or the national interest.

The SDF is a core component of a Municipality's IDP with reference to economic, sectoral, spatial, social, institutional and environmental vision. In other words, it is a tool to achieve the desired spatial form of the Municipality. GSD has been tasked to deliver the review of TLMSDF. TLM, like many other local municipalities requires a comprehensive SDF to guide both current and future development within its jurisdiction. The SDF will provide a strategic framework consisting of a set of objectives, strategies and policy guidelines aimed at directing land use and development options in a way that ensure the realisation of short term and long-term goals.

1.1 STUDY AREA

TLM is a Category B municipality established in accordance with the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998). It is one of four local municipalities within the Vhembe District Municipality (VDM) in Limpopo Province. TLM shares municipal boundaries with Collins Chabane Local Municipality (CCLM) to the southeast, Musina Local Municipality (MLM) to the northeast, and Makhado Local Municipality (MKLM) to the west. The municipality spans an area of roughly 2,893.94 square kilometres, predominantly made up of traditional or tribal land.

The municipality's political, administrative and commercial hub is located in Thohoyandou, a regional centre according to CSIR settlement typology 2015. According to census 2022, TLM is divided into 41 wards, with a population of 575929 and has a predominantly rural character, with the majority of land

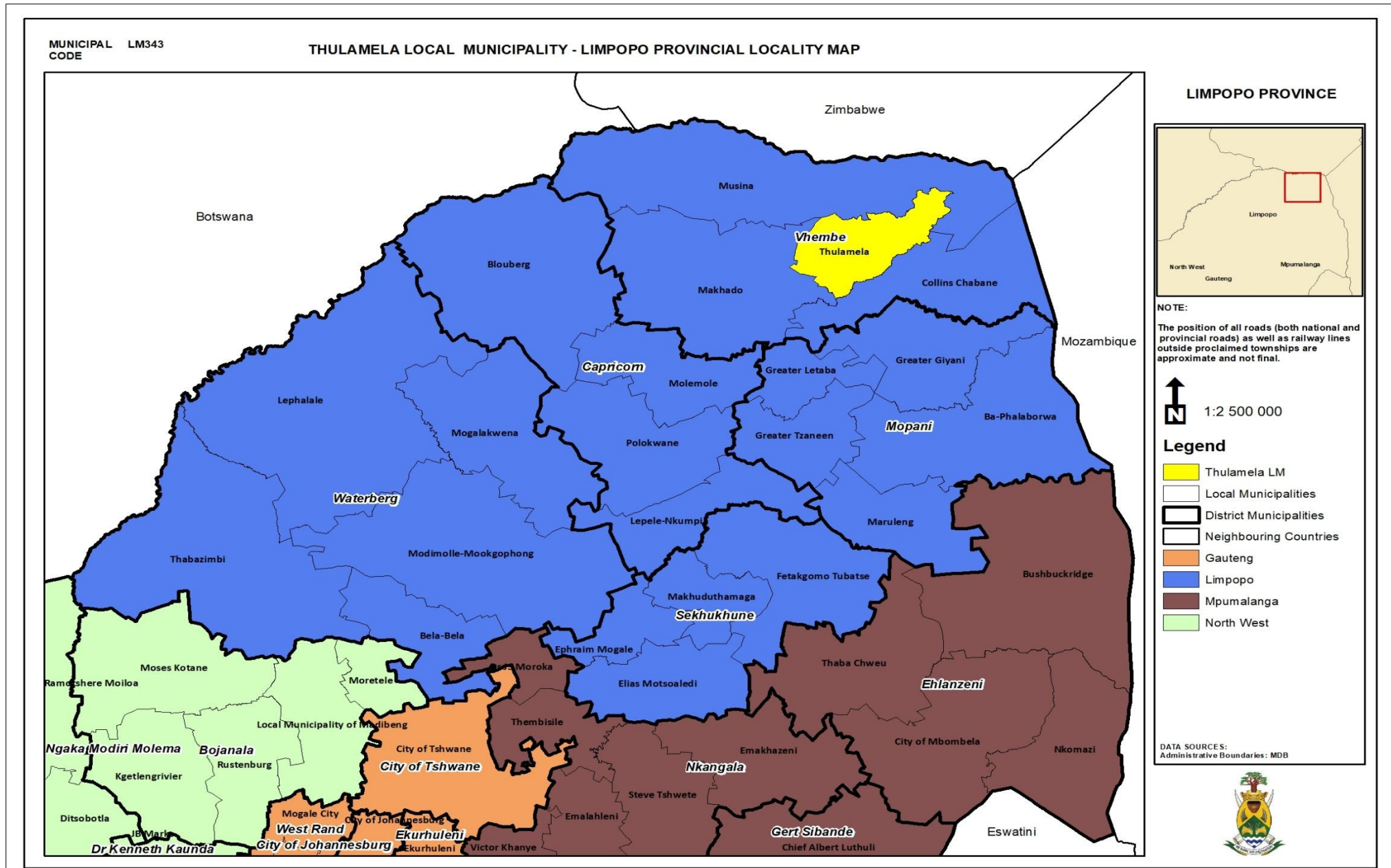
falling under the jurisdiction of Traditional Authorities. It is further subdivided into eight Traditional Council areas, namely:

-  Makuya Traditional Council
-  Tshikundamalema Traditional Council
-  Mphaphuli Traditional Council
-  Thengwe Traditional Council
-  Rambuda Traditional Council
-  Khakhu Traditional Council
-  Tshivhase Traditional Council
-  Lwamondo Traditional Council



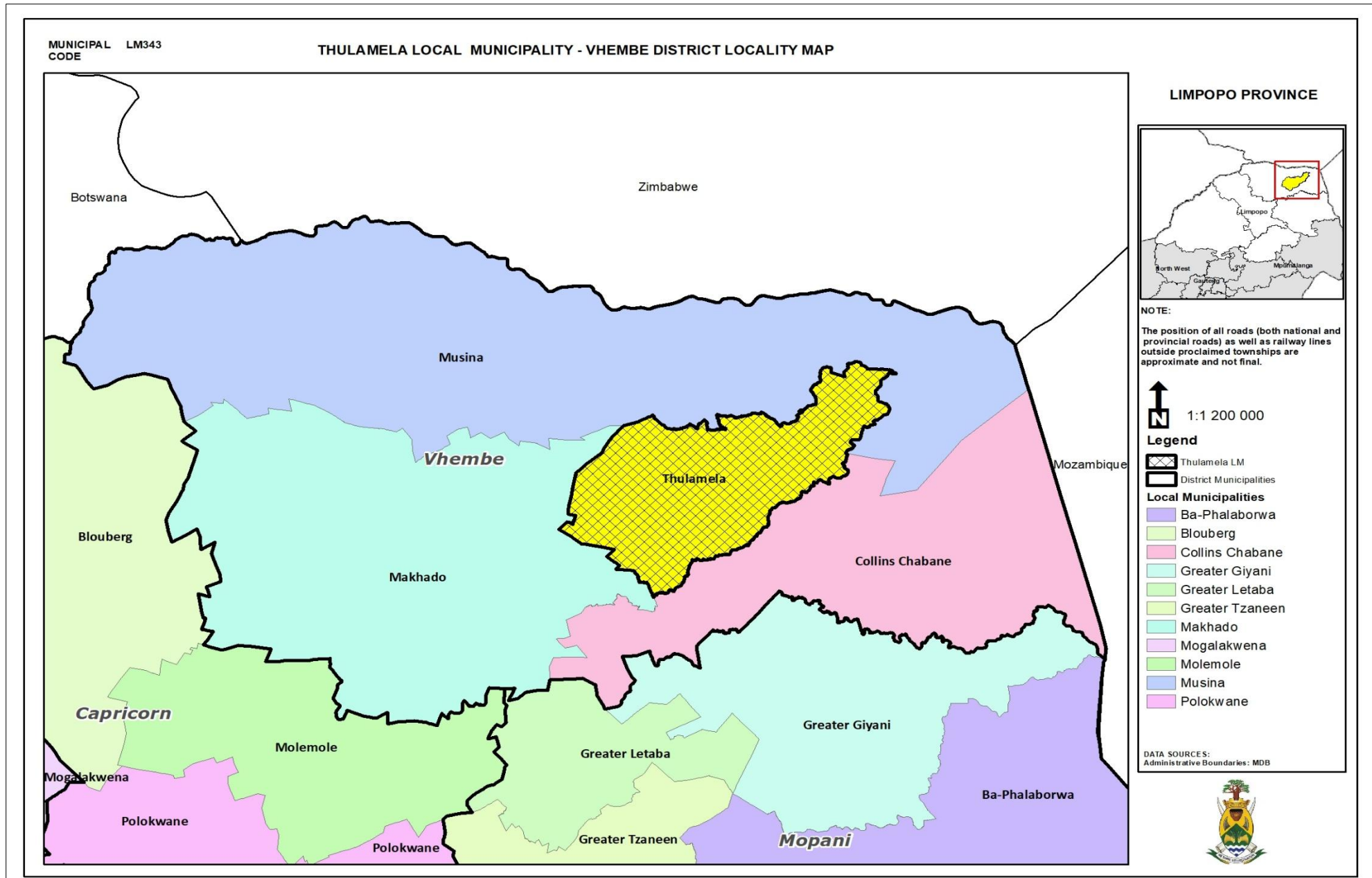


Map 1: Limpopo Provincial Locality Map



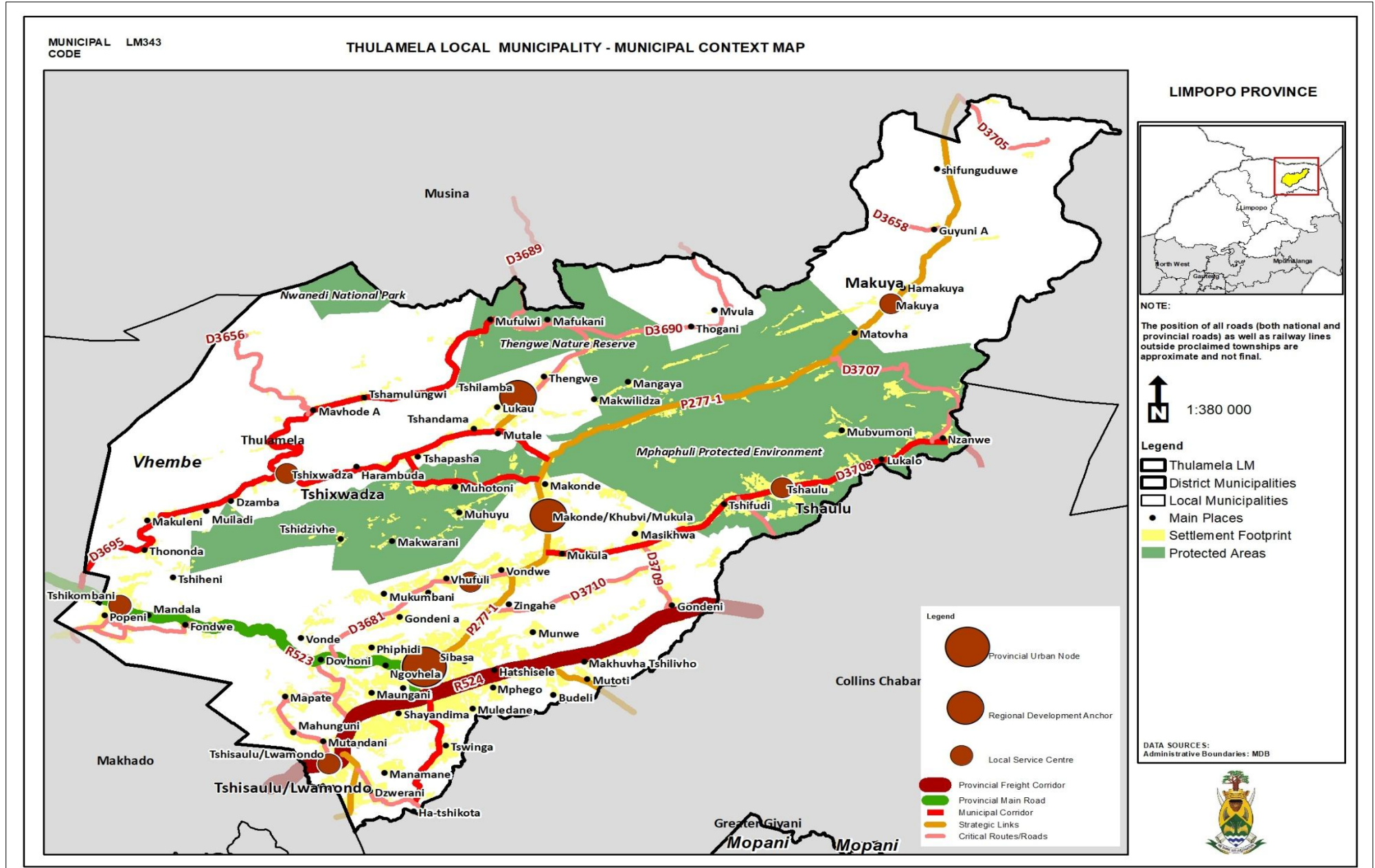


Map 2: Vhembe District Locality Map





Map 3: Municipal Locality





1.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE SDF

TLMSDF must apply development principles (Spatial Justice, Spatial Sustainability, Efficiency, Spatial Resilience and Good Administration) outlined in section 7 of the SPLUMA and achieve the minimal content standards outlined in the following laws:

Municipal Systems Act (MSA), Act 32 of 2000 and the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations (2001):

- 1) Development of a spatial vision and objective of the IDP and the whole municipality.
- 2) Development of a conceptual scenario for envisaged spatial form.
- 3) Development of a Micro-spatial Plan for the core areas.
- 4) Setting out of objectives that reflect the desired spatial form of the rural municipality.
- 5) Contain strategies, policies and plans which must:
 - ✚ Analyse the opportunities and constraints.
 - ✚ Delineate the agricultural land that has high potential.
 - ✚ Indicate desired patterns of land use within the municipality.
 - ✚ Identify existing and future land reform projects.
 - ✚ Address the spatial reconstruction of the location and nature of development within the municipality including desire settlement patterns, and
 - ✚ Provide strategic guidance in respect of the location and nature of development within the municipality.
- 6) Set out a basic framework for the development of a land use management system in the municipality:

- ✚ Set out a capital investment framework for the municipality's development programs within a prioritisation matrix (Prioritised list of development interventions and spatial locations),
- ✚ Analysis and clarification of how sector departments will implement the SDF,
- ✚ Contain a strategic assessment of the environmental impact of the SDF,
- ✚ Identify programs, interventions, and projects for the development of land within the municipality, be aligned with the SDFs of neighbouring municipalities, and
- ✚ Provide a visual representation of the desired spatial form of the municipality, which:
 - Must indicate where public and private land development and infrastructure investment should take place.
 - Must indicate all cross-border, inter-provincial and inter-municipal issues, challenges and alignment of programmes shared with neighbouring municipalities, provinces and country.
 - Must indicate desired or undesired utilisation of land/space in particular areas (nodal/growth points)
 - Must delineate the urban development edge/boundary (in terms of National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998 - NEMA).
 - Must identify areas where strategic intervention is required.
 - Must indicate areas where priority spending is required.





- Identify existing and proposed nodal areas for the development of infrastructure and social services.

The main objectives of the SDFs in terms of Section 12 (1) of SPLUMA are:

- a) Interpret and represent the spatial development vision of the responsible sphere of government and competent authority,
- b) Be informed by a long-term spatial development vision statement and plan,
- c) Represent the integration and trade-off of all relevant sector policies and plans,
- d) Guide planning and development decisions across all sectors of government,
- e) Guide a provincial department or municipality in taking any decision or exercising any discretion in terms of this Act or any other law relating to spatial planning and land use management systems,
- f) Contribute to a coherent, planned approach to spatial development in the national, provincial and municipal spheres,
- g) Provide clear and accessible information to the public and private sector and provide direction for investment purposes,
- h) Include previously disadvantaged areas, areas under traditional leadership, rural areas, informal settlements, slums and land holdings of state-owned enterprises and government agencies and address their inclusion and integration into the spatial, economic, social and environmental objectives of the relevant sphere,
- i) Address historical spatial imbalances in development,

- j) Identify the long-term risks of particular spatial patterns of growth and development and the policies and strategies necessary to mitigate those risks,
- k) Provide direction for strategic developments, infrastructure investment, promote efficient, sustainable, and planned investments by all sectors and indicate priority areas for investment in land development,
- l) Promote a rational and predictable land development environment to create trust and stimulate investment,
- m) Take cognisance of any environmental management instrument adopted by the relevant environmental management authority,
- n) Give effect to national legislation and policies on mineral resources and sustainable utilisation and protection of agricultural resources, and
- o) Consider and, where necessary, incorporate the outcomes of substantial public engagement, including direct participation in the process through public meetings, public exhibitions, public debates and discourses in the media and any other forum or mechanisms that promote such direct involvement.

In terms of Section 21 of SPLUMA the content of Municipal SDFs must:

1. Give effect to the development principles and applicable norms and standards set out in Chapter 2,
2. Include a written and spatial representation of a five-year spatial development plan for the spatial form of the municipality,
3. Include a longer-term spatial development vision statement for the municipal area which indicates a desired spatial growth and development pattern for the next 10 to 20 years,



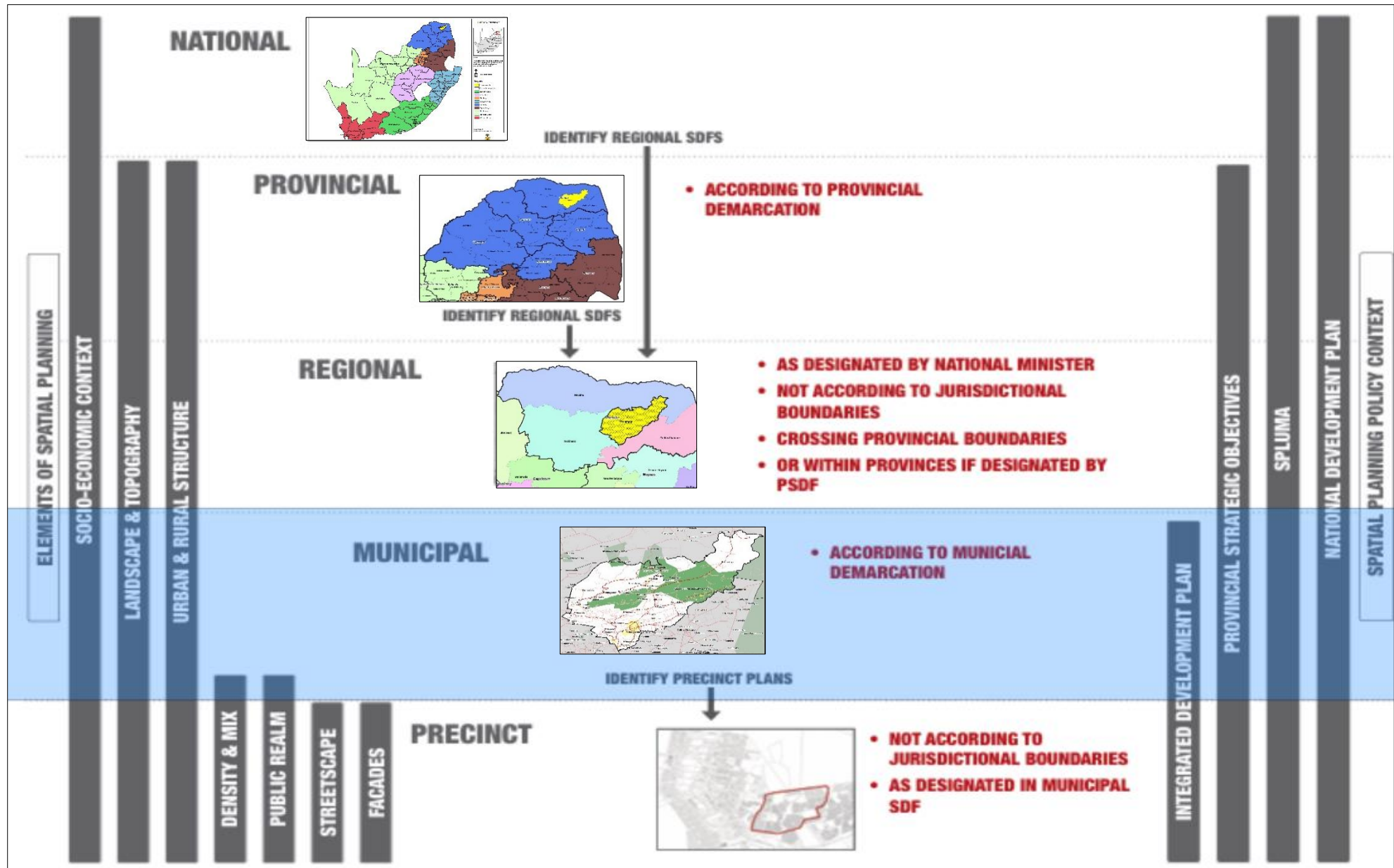


4. Identify current and future significant structuring and restructuring elements of the spatial form of the municipality, including development corridors, activity spines and economic nodes where public and private investment will be prioritised and facilitated,
 5. Include population growth estimates for the next five years,
 6. Include estimates of the demand for housing units across different socio-economic categories and the planned location and density of future housing developments,
 7. Include estimates of economic activity and employment trends and locations in the municipal area for the next five years,
 8. Identify, quantify and provide location requirements of engineering infrastructure and services provision for existing and future development needs for the next five years,
 9. Identify the designated areas where a national or provincial inclusionary housing policy may be applicable,
 10. Include a strategic assessment of the environmental pressures and opportunities within the municipal area, including the spatial location of environmental sensitivities, high potential agricultural land and coastal access strips, where applicable,
 11. Identify the designation of areas in the municipality where incremental upgrading approaches to development and regulation will be applicable,
 12. Identify the designation of areas in which —
 - i. More detailed local plans must be developed, and
 - ii. Shortened land use development procedures may be applicable and land use schemes may be so amended,
- iii. Provide the spatial expression of the coordination, alignment and integration of sectoral policies of all municipal departments,
 - iv. Determine a capital expenditure framework for the municipality's development programmes, depicted spatially,
 - v. Determine the purpose, desired impact, and structure of the land use management scheme to apply in that municipal area, and
 - vi. Include an implementation plan comprising of —
 - a. Sectoral requirements, including budgets and resources for implementation,
 - b. Necessary amendments to a land use scheme,
 - c. Specification of institutional arrangements necessary for implementation,
 - d. Specification of implementation targets, including dates and monitoring indicators, and
 - e. Specification, where necessary, of any arrangements for partnerships in the implementation process.





Figure 1: The Relationship Between Spatial Frameworks and Implementation Plans at Various Scales of Planning





1.3 PROJECT AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the project is to review and amend TLMSDF to address spatial, environmental and economic issues confronting the municipality. An SDF that will facilitate implementation of the IDP and all government intentions to fight poverty and facilitate rural development is required. GSD has therefore been appointed to review an SDF which complies with the MSA and Municipal Planning & Performance Management Regulations, 2001, read together with the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, Act 16 of 2013.

- ✚ Give effect to the principles contained in chapter 2 of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, Act 16 of 2013.
- ✚ Set out objectives that reflect desired-spatial form of the rural municipality.
- ✚ Contain strategies, policies and plans which must:
 - Indicate desired patterns of land use within the municipality.
 - Address the spatial reconstruction of the location and nature of development within the municipality, and
 - Provide strategic guidance in respect of the location and nature of development within the municipality.
- ✚ Set out basic guidelines for land use management system in the municipality,
- ✚ Set out a capital investment framework for the municipality's development programs,
- ✚ Contain a strategic assessment of the environmental impact of the SDF

- ✚ Identify programs and projects for the development of land within the municipality,
- ✚ Be aligned with the SDFs reflected in the integrated development plans of neighbouring, and
- ✚ Provide a visual representation of the desired spatial form of the municipality, which representation:
 - must indicate where public and private land development and infrastructure investment should take place,
 - must indicate desired or undesired utilisation of space in a particular area,
 - may delineate the urban edge,
 - must identify areas where strategic intervention is required, and
 - must indicate areas where priority spending is required.

1.4 SDF PROCESS

Chapter 1 outlines the purpose, role, process of the SDF review and provides an overview of the TLM.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the relevant national and provincial policy context within which the TLMSDF is to be reviewed.

Chapter 3 represents the spatial analysis and synthesis which provides a multi-disciplinary analysis of the current situation regarding the local context of the TLM. The situational analysis provided a list of development opportunities and constraints identified and summarised.





Chapter 4 contains the spatial proposals for the TLM which is based on the development objectives and aligned with the development principles.

Chapter 5 Brings to life the SDF chapters, specifically the strategies, policies, and principles into a targeted set of implementation recommendations. The chapter includes the Capital Expenditure Framework, Implementation Policies & Monitoring and Evaluation.



The background image shows the exterior of Thavhan Mall at dusk. The mall's name is displayed in large, illuminated letters on the roof, with a circular logo featuring concentric arcs above it. Below the main entrance, there are signs for 'Rocominas' and 'smashburger'. Several cars are parked or moving in the foreground, with some appearing blurred due to motion. The scene is framed by large, light blue geometric shapes in the corners, and the overall lighting is a mix of the cool blue of the twilight sky and the warm yellow of the mall's interior lights.

2. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY DIRECTIVE



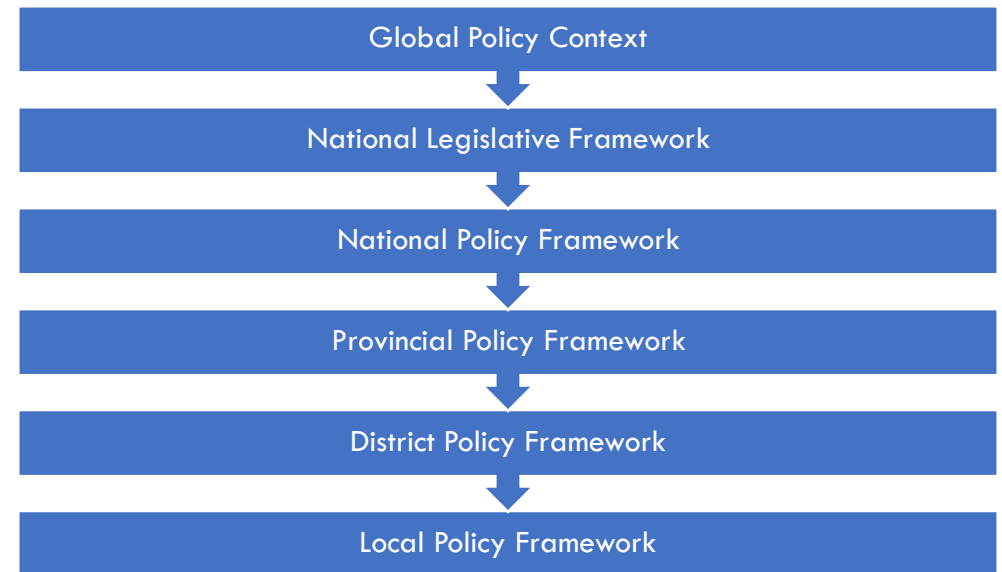
2. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DIRECTIVE

A municipal SDF (SDF) is a strategic planning document which reflects the municipality's long-term spatial development vision for the next 10 to 20 years. Moreover, it is a core component of the municipality's spatial, economic, sectoral, institutional and environmental vision. In a nutshell, a MSDF is a tool to achieve the desired spatial form of the municipality, basically a graphic expression of the municipality's IDP and therefore a spatial representation of the municipality's vision, as it guides the location of development or catalytic projects as envisaged in the IDP. Section 26 (e) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 as amended and Section 12 (1) of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013 (SPLUMA) requires each municipality to compile a MSDF for its area of jurisdiction as a core component of an Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT AND VISION DIRECTIVES

The policy and legislative context guiding SDFs in South African municipalities is grounded in a combination of global development agendas and national regulatory frameworks that seeks to address spatial inequality, sustainability, and inclusive urban growth. These includes SDGs, New Urban Agenda, SPLUMA, NDP, etc

Figure 2: Policy Context alignment



2.2 GLOBAL POLICY CONTEXT

The global policy context refers to the broader international frameworks, agreements, and trends that influence national and local policy making. It provides a backdrop against which countries and regions align their strategies, especially on issues that transcend borders like climate change, biodiversity, human rights, and sustainable development

2.2.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015 by 193 countries including South Africa, provides a global framework through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





South Africa conducted a Voluntary National Review of progress with the implementation of the SDGs, resulting in the South Africa Sustainable Development Goals Country Report 2019 (StatsSA, 2019). Based on the assessment, a range of priorities have been set to facilitate achievement of the SDGs (StatsSA, 2019). Ensuring alignment across policy agendas, the Integrated Indicator Framework has been developed for South Africa that aligns SDGs 2030 and the Africa Agenda 2063 with the National Development Plan 2030

Figure 3: SDG Goals





Table 1: SDG Priorities of South Africa

GOAL	PRIORITY	LINK TO TLM
SOCIAL	Improve Access to Basic Services	Enhance availability and quality of water, sanitation, electricity, and other services.
	Promote Higher Quality and Industry-Relevant Education and Training	Align education and training with labour market needs to improve employability. i.e Partnership between University of Venda and TLM and other Sectors (PPPs).
	Promote Innovative and Sustainable Health Financing	Develop new funding mechanisms to ensure health system sustainability.
	Prioritise Social Determinants of Health.	Address factors like housing, nutrition and environment that affect health.
	Correct Gaps in Legislation and Policy Addressing Discrimination	Strengthen legal frameworks to promote equality and protect rights
ECONOMIC	Promote Effective Governance, Robust Leadership, and Participative Citizenry	Enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in governance
	Build an Effective Policy Environment	Developing coherent policies that support sustainable economic growth
	Encourage Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Support start-ups and innovation to drive economic diversification.
	Increase Local and International Investment (agriculture and tourism)	Attract investments to stimulate economic development
	Implement High-Quality Regulation of Network Industries	Ensure fair and efficient regulation in sectors like energy, transport, and telecommunications
ENVIRONMENTAL	Strengthen National Climate Change	Enhance policies and actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change i.e Thulamela Adaptation Plan 2024
	Improve Water Infrastructure Asset Management	Upgrading and maintaining water supply and sanitation infrastructure
	Revitalise and Stabilise Water Sector Institutional Environment	Improving governance and coordination in water management





GOAL	PRIORITY	LINK TO TLM
	Stabilise Water Sector Revenue Environment	Ensure sustainable financing for water services.
	Improve Water Sector Information and Data Management	Enhance data collection and use of informed water decision-making
GOVERNANCE, PEACE, JUSTICE AND SECURITY	Increase access to justice for all	Ensure equitable distribution of justice facilities and support public participation for improved access
	Strengthen and broaden South Africa's participation in international bodies	Align the local development plan with national frameworks supporting broader governance and international integration.
	Combat corruption and bribery	Promote transparency and accountability in municipal planning decision-making.
	Promote and protect the right of public access to information	Encourage public engagement and access to information in development decisions.





2.3 NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The national legislative framework ensures that SDFs are legally sound, aligned with national priorities, and contribute to spatial transformation and sustainable development. It provides the structure for reviewing SDFs so they can effectively guide land use, infrastructure, and social development across all spheres of government.

2.3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

Section 156(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 states that a municipality has executive authority in respect of and has the right to administer the local government matters listed in Part B of Schedule 4 and Part B of Schedule 5 which, inter alia, include municipal planning. Therefore, TLM has a responsibility to undertake spatial planning for its area of jurisdiction.

2.3.2 National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA)

The SPLUMA (16 of 2013), requires that MSDF must comply with relevant environmental laws. NEMA plays a crucial role in promoting cooperative governance by providing decision-making principles, establishing environmental institutions, and coordinating responsibilities across government spheres.

In addition, it addresses key priorities such as environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation, and responsible use of natural resources, which are vital for the long-term socio-economic well-being of rural and urban communities at a local level.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

In Reviewing the TLM SDF, NEMA (107 of 1998) requires TLM to:

-  *Integrate sustainability into all spatial planning decisions within SDAs*
-  *Avoid development in environmentally sensitive areas*
-  *Ensure environmental assessments guide development approvals*
-  *Promote climate resilience, risk avoidance, and ecological integrity*
-  *Ensure planning supports environmental justice and public involvement*
-  *TLM is therefore required by this act, to create rural and urban spaces whilst ensuring sustainable utilisation of the environment. Therefore, the Review of TLMSDF should take cognisance of NEMA regulations when developing spatial proposals for Strategic Development Areas (SDAs), while permission for new land use and land developments should be cautiously managed.*





2.3.3 National Forests Act 84 of 1998 (NFA)

The exclusive mandate of this act is to promote the sustainable management and development of forests.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

-  *The National Forests Act requires TLM to ensure that all natural forests and protected tree species are identified, mapped, and safeguarded.*
-  *These areas must be zoned for conservation or limited development, and buffer zones should be established to protect forest edges from environmental degradation and human encroachment.*
-  *The SDF must restrict land uses such as urban expansion, agriculture, infrastructure, or mining within and around forest areas to prevent deforestation and preserve the ecological integrity of forest ecosystems.*
-  *Forests also play a critical role in biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation as such, they should be integrated into broader ecological networks and biodiversity corridors within the municipality's spatial plan.*

 *Furthermore, the Act encourages sustainable forest-based livelihoods like eco-tourism and the harvesting of non-timber products.*

 *The SDF should reflect this by planning for compatible economic activities*

that benefit local communities while conserving forest resources.

 *In areas like Thathe Vondo, where forests may hold cultural or spiritual significance, the SDF must also ensure that cultural heritage is respected and protected from development pressures.*

2.3.4 National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 21 of 2014 (NEMPAA)

The aims of this legislation are to establish and manage protected areas to conserve the biodiversity and the natural heritage. It also seeks to create a national system of protected areas that includes land owned by the state, private entities, and communities, by ensuring a representative and well-managed network. The act further supports co-operative governance, encouraging collaboration between different levels of government and stakeholders in the declaration and management of these areas. Moreover, this legislation promotes the sustainable use of protected areas to benefit local people while preserving their ecological integrity.





It emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in managing these areas, ensuring that conservation efforts also contribute to social and economic development.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

The NEMPAA (2014) has the following key spatial implications:

-  *Restrict development in and around protected areas*
-  *Promote ecological integrity and biodiversity connectivity*
-  *Encourage sustainable land uses like eco-tourism*
-  *Align with national and provincial conservation priorities*
-  *Ensure long-term environmental sustainability and resilience*

2.3.5 National Environmental Air Quality Act 39 of 2004 (NEAQ)

The objectives of the National Environmental Air Quality Act 39 of 2004 are to protect the environment by providing reasonable measures for the protection and enhancement of the quality of air.

It aims to prevent air pollution and ecological degradation as well as securing an environment that is not harmful to the health and well-being of people. With the current trend of Climate Change as witnessed through global warming as a result of greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, it is vital that local municipalities play a role in reversing the current trend, linked to this is a need to place noxious industries in areas that are safe for communities. An MSDF can set the principle on the location of such industries that can be further emphasized by the municipality's land use management scheme, thereby spatially depicting their locations and then put measures in place for air quality control.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

The Air Quality Act has the following spatial implications for the TLM SDF review:

-  *Pollution-generating land uses hardware's/noxious industries must be spatially separated from sensitive receptors (CBD, homes, schools, clinics).*
-  *Buffer zones and green infrastructure should be planned around high-emission activities.*
-  *The SDF must prevent cumulative air quality degradation through better land use zoning.*
-  *Planning should promote low-emission transport systems and compact urban design.*





- ✚ The SDF must support environmental justice by protecting vulnerable communities from air pollution.
- ✚ The plan should align with the Municipal Air Quality Management Plan and broader environmental policies.

2.3.6 National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 (NEMBA)

The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 provides for the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of South Africa's biological diversity. In TLM, the review of the SDF must integrate the objectives of this Act to ensure that biodiversity conservation is embedded in spatial planning and land use decision-making. One of the key spatial implications of NEMBA is the requirement to identify, map, and protect biodiversity priority areas within the municipal jurisdiction. These include Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs), Ecological Support Areas (ESAs), threatened ecosystems, and habitats of species of special concern.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLM SDF:

- ✚ Biodiversity priority areas (CBAs, ESAs, threatened ecosystems) must be mapped and protected through spatial planning tools.
- ✚ The SDF must restrict harmful development in ecologically sensitive zones.

- ✚ Ecological corridors must be maintained to promote ecosystem connectivity and resilience.
- ✚ Land use planning should support the rehabilitation of degraded areas and control of invasive species.
- ✚ The SDF should promote sustainable biodiversity-based livelihoods such as eco-tourism and traditional harvesting.
- ✚ The spatial plan must align with national and provincial biodiversity planning instruments to ensure legal compliance and ecological integrity.

2.3.7 National Environmental Management Waste Act 59 of 2008 (NEMWA)

The National Environmental Management Waste Act No 59 of 2008 gives effect to Section 24 of the Constitution of South Africa, which is to secure an environment that, is not harmful to health and well-being of people within their respectful communities. Moreover, this is South Africa's primary legislation for waste management. Its goal is to protect health and the environment by regulating the generation, handling, storage, treatment, and disposal of waste.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:





- ✚ *Waste disposal and treatment sites must be strategically and safely located, with proper zoning and buffer areas.*
- ✚ *The SDF should promote local recycling infrastructure and enable circular economy practices.*
- ✚ *Illegal dumping areas must be identified for rehabilitation or formalization.*
- ✚ *Efficient waste transport networks must be planned to minimize environmental impact.*
- ✚ *The SDF must align with the Municipal Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP).*
- ✚ *The spatial plan should ensure environmental justice, preventing the unfair burden of waste-related risks on vulnerable communities.*

2.3.8 National Water Act 36 of 1998 (NWA)

The National Water Act (NWA) is South Africa's principal legislation for the management, protection, use, development, conservation, and control of water resources. The NWA primary spatial considerations include the protection of water resources, including rivers, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and catchment zones, secondly

emphasizes water use licensing and the sustainable allocation of water resources.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLM SDF:

- ✚ *Mapping and protecting rivers, wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, and catchments through sensitive zoning and land use controls.*
- ✚ *Establishing buffer zones/setbacks along water bodies to safeguard water quality and reduce flood risk.*
- ✚ *Restricting or carefully managing pollution-prone land uses near water resources.*
- ✚ *Ensuring that new developments align with water availability and infrastructure capacity.*
- ✚ *Prioritising the conservation and rehabilitation of wetlands and aquatic ecosystems.*
- ✚ *Incorporating stormwater management and erosion control measures into spatial planning.*
- ✚ *Aligning municipal spatial plans with regional catchment management strategies for integrated water governance.*





2.3.9 Municipal Structures Act 17 of 1998 (as Amended)

The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 (as amended), is a key legislative framework that defines the structures, roles, and functions of municipalities in South Africa. It provides the institutional and governance foundation upon which municipal planning, including the development and review of SDFs, is carried out. For TLM, the Act has important spatial implications that must be considered in the SDF review process to ensure that planning is aligned with legislative mandates and governance structures.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Reaffirms the municipality's authority and responsibility for spatial planning and land use management.*
- ✚ *Requires alignment and coordination with the district municipality's SDF and regional plans.*
- ✚ *Promotes inclusive, participatory planning through ward structures and community engagement.*
- ✚ *Guides planning based on the municipal category (Category B) and shared responsibilities with the district.*
- ✚ *Demands that spatial planning supports efficient, equitable service delivery.*

- ✚ *Encourages the SDF to be a tool for spatial transformation and social redress.*

2.3.10 National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA)

The National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, provides for the identification, conservation, protection, and promotion of South Africa's heritage resources. With reference to TLM, which contains rich cultural, historical, and archaeological heritage including the well-known Thulamela ruins, this Act has significant spatial planning implications that must be addressed in the review of the SDF (SDF).

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *All heritage sites and culturally significant areas are identified, mapped, and protected.*
- ✚ *Development near heritage resources is controlled through zoning overlays, HIAs, and buffer zones.*
- ✚ *The SDF promotes cultural tourism and sustainable economic development based on heritage assets.*
- ✚ *Community values and traditional knowledge are respected through participatory planning.*
- ✚ *Land use decisions comply with heritage legislation and align with broader environmental and spatial frameworks.*





2.3.11 Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (as Amended)

The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (as amended), sets out the administrative, planning, and participatory systems that municipalities must use to fulfil their constitutional obligations. In particular, it provides the legislative framework for IDP of which the SDF is a core component. As such, the Act has significant spatial implications for how the TLM reviews, updates, and implements its SDF.

Spatial Implication on the Review TLMSDF:

-  *The SDF must be a core component of the IDP and reflect the municipality's long-term spatial vision.*
-  *Spatial planning must be integrated across sectors and aligned with district, provincial, and national frameworks.*
-  *The SDF must be participatory, incorporating inputs from communities and local stakeholders.*
-  *It must promote developmental local government, focusing on spatial equity, sustainability, and social justice.*
-  *The plan must include implementation strategies and be supported by performance monitoring tools.*
-  *The review process must ensure institutional coordination across all spheres of government.*

2.3.12 National Land Transport Act 23 of 2023 (NLTA)

The National Land Transport Amendment Act 23 of 2023 updates the core National Land Transport Act (2009), with important spatial outcomes for municipal planning and the spatial implications for TLM are highlighted below

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

-  *Spatially map and prioritize multi-modal transport corridors, emphasizing non-motorised movement and public transport.*
-  *Plan for transit-oriented densification around identified hubs and nodes (e.g., taxi ranks, BRT routes).*
-  *Ensure accessibility infrastructure is evenly distributed, especially for disadvantaged and peripheral communities.*
-  *Strengthen municipal control by designating public transport and e-hailing zones in spatial land use maps.*
-  *Embed transport safety design measures, (e.g., traffic calmed zones near establishments adjacent the district, provincial and national roads, schools and clinics).*
-  *Synchronize with the ITP, ensuring spatial alignment with transport network planning and paired service infrastructure.*





2.3.13 Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework

Amendment Act 2 of 2019 (TLGFA)

The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Amendment Act 2 of 2019 updates and strengthens the role of traditional leadership within the democratic governance system of South Africa. In TLM, where large areas fall under traditional authorities and communal land tenure, the Act has critical spatial planning implications that must be reflected in the review of TLMSDF. The Act also states that the functions of a Local House of Traditional Leaders are to advise the district/local municipality in question, on the development of planning frameworks that impact on rural communities and to participate in local programmes that have the development of communities as an objective.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Traditional council boundaries must be mapped and respected in spatial planning.*
- ✚ *The SDF must support inclusive land use planning that reflects both municipal and traditional governance systems.*
- ✚ *Planning processes must enable joint decision-making and consultation with traditional leaders.*

- ✚ *Culturally significant sites must be protected and buffered from incompatible development.*
- ✚ *Rural development strategies must be community-driven and spatially support communal livelihoods.*
- ✚ *Spatial frameworks must recognize and align with customary practices, while ensuring compliance with broader statutory planning laws.*

2.3.14 Infrastructure Development Act 23 of 2014 (IDA)

The Infrastructure Development Act 23 of 2014, was enacted to accelerate the implementation of Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIPs) that are essential to South Africa's social and economic development. The Act establishes mechanisms for integrated planning and coordinated implementation of infrastructure across all spheres of government. In TLM this Act has important spatial implications for how large-scale infrastructure projects are planned and integrated into the local development agenda through the SDF

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *The SDF must align with national SIPs and reflect them in local spatial planning.*





- ✚ Spatial development nodes must be prioritized where bulk infrastructure can enable growth and service delivery.
- ✚ The SDF must support faster approvals and zoning readiness for major infrastructure investments.
- ✚ Cross-municipal infrastructure corridors must be integrated spatially and planned collaboratively.
- ✚ The SDF must promote infrastructure-led development that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

2.3.15 Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013 (SPLUMA)

The Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act 16 of 2013, is South Africa's key legislative framework guiding spatial planning, land development, and land use management. It standardizes how municipalities plan and regulates land across the republic and mandates each municipality to prepare a MSDF. In TLM, SPLUMA has direct and critical spatial implications that must guide the review of the SDF.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

Mandatory SDF as a Legal Requirement

SPLUMA requires every municipality to adopt and review a MSDF as part of its IDP. The TLM SDF must be prepared and reviewed in compliance with Chapter 4 of SPLUMA, ensuring that it serves as the municipality's primary spatial policy and land use vision.

Promotion of Spatial Justice

SPLUMA emphasizes spatial transformation and redress of historical spatial imbalances. The Review of TLM SDF must support:

- ✚ Equitable access to land, infrastructure, and opportunities
- ✚ Inclusion of rural, marginalised, and traditional communities in development
- ✚ Upgrading of informal settlements and integration into formal planning systems

This then promotes spatial justice and addresses apartheid-era spatial inequalities.

Sustainability and Spatial Efficiency

SPLUMA calls for land use and development that is sustainable, resource-efficient, and compact. The TLM SDF Review must:

- ✚ Promote densification and infill development
- ✚ Prevent urban and rural sprawl and protect agricultural and environmental land





- ✚ Align future growth with available infrastructure and service capacity

This ensures the municipality grows in a responsible and cost-effective manner.

Alignment and Integration

SPLUMA mandates that MSDFs must align with:

- ✚ Provincial SDF (LSDF)
- ✚ District SDF (VDM SDF)
- ✚ National spatial directives (NSDF)

TLMSDF Review must therefore be spatially and strategically aligned across all levels/spheres of government.

Guidance for Land Use Management

The Review of TLMSDF must provide a spatial rationale for TLM Land Use Scheme, which regulates land rights and zoning. The Review of TLMSDF should:

- ✚ Clearly define land use zones, development intensities, and spatial priorities
- ✚ Guide decision-making by the Municipal Planning Tribunal (MPT)
- ✚ Identify special planning areas, corridors, and nodes for development focus

This automatically ensures that land use is managed in a predictable, transparent, and fair manner.

Public Participation and Transparency

SPLUMA requires inclusive and participatory planning processes. The Review of the TLM SDF must involve:

- ✚ Consultations with communities, stakeholders, and Traditional Authorities/Councils
- ✚ Consideration of public input in spatial proposals/priorities and land use proposals

2.3.16 Spatial Data Infrastructure Act 54 of 2003 (SDIA)

It aims to regulate the collection, management, maintenance, integration, distribution, and utilisation of spatial or geographic information. It facilitates the sharing of information among various organs of state, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

Objectives

Spatial Data Infrastructure Act 54 of 2003 intends to:

- ✚ To establish the South African Spatial Data Infrastructure, the Committee for Spatial Information and an electronic metadata catalogue.





- ✚ To provide for the determination of standards and prescriptions regarding the facilitation of the sharing of spatial information.
- ✚ To provide for the capture and publishing of metadata and the avoidance of duplication of such capture.
- ✚ To provide for matters connected therewith.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Evidence-based & integrated planning as this Act ensures accurate, standardised and shared spatial data for SDF.*
- ✚ *Efficient service delivery & sustainable land use, as this Act ensures that data is reliable.*
- ✚ *Enhanced participation & governance as accessible spatial information strengthens stakeholder engagement.*

2.3.17 National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act 103 of 1977 (NBRBSA)

The National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act 103 of 1977 was enacted to ensure that building practices across local authorities in South Africa are consistent and adhere to prescribed standards. The Act aims to:

- ✚ Promote uniformity in the law relating to the erection of buildings

- ✚ Prescribe building standards to ensure safety, health, and environmental considerations in construction practices.
- ✚ Address matters related to building regulations and standards.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Guides settlement growth and uniformity in built form within TLM jurisdiction.*
- ✚ *Improve safety, health, and environmental quality in spatial planning within TLM jurisdiction.*

2.3.18 The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

The Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000) is a South African law that gives effect to the constitutional right of access to information, as provided in Section 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The Act aims to give effect to the constitutional right of access to information, promote transparency, accountability, and good governance, and foster a culture of openness and participation. It seeks to strengthen democracy through the effective use of information, while balancing access with the protection of privacy, confidentiality, and security, and provides clear procedures for requesting and obtaining records.

Spatial Implication on the Review of TLM SDF





- + PAIA facilitates public participation by enabling communities to access relevant information, allowing them to make informed contributions to the TLM SDF review process.
- + Supports informed decision-making in the review of the TLM SDF by ensuring that spatial planning decisions are based on accessible and accurate information.
- + Protects the rights of communities within TLM by allowing them to request information when land use decisions affect housing, livelihoods, or environmental rights during the SDF review.
- + Promotes integration and coordination in the TLM SDF review by facilitating alignment between municipal, provincial, and national spatial plans through effective information sharing.
- + PAIA enhances accountability in the TLM SDF review by strengthening oversight of land use and development decisions, thereby reducing the risks of exclusionary practices.
- + Promote transparency in planning during the review of the TLM SDF, ensuring that spatial planning information, including land use data, maps, zoning, and development proposals, is openly available to all stakeholders.

2.3.19 Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act 31 of 1996 (IPILRA)

The Act was shaped to protect the informal land rights of people living on or using land that they do not formally own, particularly in rural

and communal areas. It recognizes the historical injustices in land ownership caused by apartheid and aims to safeguard vulnerable communities until permanent legislation is enacted. This IPILRA entails:

- + Protecting vulnerable rural communities from losing their land.
- + Recognizing customary and informal tenure systems that are widespread throughout TLM, VDM, Limpopo province and South Africa.
- + Preventing unjust evictions or land transactions done without public participation or consent.
- + Often invoked in legal disputes where communal or traditional land is being sold or leased (e.g., to Investors/Developers).
- + Ensures that TLM and private entities cannot forcefully remove people or change land use without proper legal and public participation processes.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- + Zoning and Land Use Schemes need to explicitly distinguish between land currently under informal or customary use





versus “vacant” or “agricultural” land, so as to protect current uses.

- + Integrating customary land with TLM planning tools such as SDFs, TLM SPLUM By-Laws, land use management need to integrate informal tenure systems and allow for co-governance with Traditional Authorities.
- + Secure tenure and incremental upgrading perhaps through legal recognition or documentation while avoiding forced formalisation if not suitable. In parallel, upgrade economic infrastructure (roads, sanitation, services) in those areas under Traditional Authorities.
- + Protect agricultural lands & food security throughout TLM preventing indiscriminate conversion of productive or fallow farmland. Implement protection by means of zoning, supporting small-scale farming. Map and monitor land cover change.
- + Spatial equity in service delivery ensuring economic infrastructure and public services is extended into areas under Traditional Authorities/rural areas, reducing the spatial inequalities.

- + Participatory planning & stakeholder inclusion in TLM planning processes must include public participation and Traditional Authorities.

2.3.20 Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002

The Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002 provides a national framework for preventing and managing disasters. It requires all government spheres to prepare disaster management plans, conduct risk assessments, and coordinate disaster response and mitigation efforts.

Spatial implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- + Land-use planning must incorporate hazard and risk assessments.
- + Development should be restricted in high-risk zones like floodplains, steep slopes, and fire-prone areas.
- + Infrastructure must be designed for resilience against hazards.
- + Environmental buffers (wetlands, river corridors, drainage systems) must be protected.
- + Municipal SDFs and IDPs must align with disaster-risk reduction principles.





2.3.21 Summary of National Legislative Framework

National legislation guides how municipalities operate, plan, and deliver services. For Thulamela Local Municipality, several Acts shape governance, spatial planning, service delivery, and development. These national acts collectively guide how TLM plans, manages land, protects the environment, uses finances, involves communities, and delivers services. They ensure that development within the municipality is lawful, sustainable, and aligned with national standards.





2.4 NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

National policies address a wide range of issues, from economic development and social welfare to environmental protection within communities in South Africa and provide a framework for national government action to improve socio-economic conditions, promoting economic growth ensuring public participation in policy making. Furthermore, the national policy framework also outlines principles for effective policy development as well as implementation of laws, regulation and standards at national level transcending down to provincial and municipal level.

2.4.1 National Transport Master Plan (NATMAP), 2005 – 2050

The National Transport Master Plan (NATMAP) 2005 – 2050 is South Africa's long-term strategic framework for integrated and sustainable transport development. It sets out to guide investment and planning in all transport modes (road, rail, air, and maritime) to support national growth and spatial transformation. NATMAP has key spatial implications that influence how land use, infrastructure, and mobility are planned over the long term.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ Guides the spatial integration of transport and land use through corridor and nodal planning

- ✚ Requires improved rural accessibility and mobility equity
- ✚ Supports multi-modal transport networks that enhance connectivity and efficiency
- ✚ Promotes sustainable transport planning and low-carbon urban form
- ✚ Ensures long-term alignment with national infrastructure investment priorities
- ✚ Requires phased and future-oriented spatial planning for transport infrastructure and services

2.4.2 Regional Industrial Development Strategy 2006

The 2006 RIDS initiative, spearheaded by South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), introduced a place based industrial development approach. It encouraged provinces and municipalities to form public private partnerships (PPPs), develop industrial estates and infrastructure (roads, electricity, training), and build systemic competitiveness in key regions while minimizing ecological impacts.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ Targeted Infrastructure Alignment
- ✚ Promoting Mixed-Use, Rural-Urban Transformation
- ✚ Spatial Justice and Inclusion





- ✚ Sectoral and Cluster Planning as well as

- ✚ Environmental Sensitivity

2.4.3 National Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), 2009

The National Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), introduced in 2009 by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, aims to address poverty, food insecurity, underdevelopment, and marginalisation in rural areas. It emphasizes agrarian transformation, rural infrastructure development, and sustainable livelihoods. TLM includes vast rural areas, traditional communities, and communal land holdings, the CRDP has significant spatial planning implications that must be considered in the review of the TLM SDF.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ Designation of rural development nodes for services and investment
- ✚ Support for agrarian transformation through land allocation and infrastructure
- ✚ Prioritisation of rural infrastructure and service delivery
- ✚ Facilitation of land reform, tenure security, and traditional governance

- ✚ Enablement of rural livelihoods and local economic development

- ✚ Improved connectivity and integration between rural and urban spaces

2.4.4 Integrated Resource Plan for Electricity 2010 – 2030

The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2010 – 2030 is South Africa's national electricity roadmap, developed to ensure the country's power supply is secure, sustainable, and cost-effective. It outlines targets for electricity generation from diverse energy sources (coal, renewables, nuclear, gas) and guides the expansion and upgrading of national and local energy infrastructure. TLM is a predominantly rural municipality with energy access challenges, the IRP has important spatial implications for how energy systems and future development are addressed in the Review of TLMSDF.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ Plan for universal access to electricity, prioritising rural and informal areas
- ✚ Allocate land for renewable energy generation and IPP projects, especially solar
- ✚ Align energy infrastructure with economic zones and service hubs





- ✚ *Protect and integrate electricity transmission corridors into land use planning*

- ✚ *Support climate-resilient, low-carbon development through spatial form*

- and land use*

2.4.5 National Spatial Developmental Framework (NSDF), 2022

Alignment with National Spatial Vision and Development Corridors

NSDF Vision: The NSDF promotes a *spatially just, resilient, and sustainable South Africa* through more compact, connected, and coordinated urban and rural development.

Implication for TLM: The revised SDF must align with the national spatial vision by:

- ✚ *Promoting compact urban form in urban areas like Thohoyandou/Sibasa.*

- ✚ *Identifying and strengthening development corridors, especially where regional and provincial routes pass through (i.e., N1, R524 and so forth).*

- ✚ *Ensuring rural-urban integration, especially for surrounding villages and traditional areas.*

Role Clarification of TLM in the National Settlement Typology

NSDF Objective: Recognize the different roles and functions of settlements.

Implication: TLM should clarify its regional role:

- ✚ *Thohoyandou is classified as a regional service anchor, which implies planning for higher-order services and infrastructure.*

- ✚ *Rural settlements must be guided by appropriate service levels and infrastructure investment to avoid over investment in unsustainable nodes.*

Sustainability and Environmental Management

NSDF Principles: Emphasises environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

Implication: Thulamela SDF must:

- ✚ *Integrate climate change adaptation in land use planning.*

- ✚ *Protect ecologically sensitive areas such as rivers, wetlands, and forest patches.*

- ✚ *Ensure spatial growth boundaries to prevent urban and rural sprawl into environmental or agriculturally valuable land.*

Inclusive and Equitable Development

Pro Goal: Promote spatial justice and inclusion, addressing apartheid-era spatial inequalities.





Implication:

- ✚ Prioritize infrastructure investment in isolated and marginalized rural settlements
- ✚ Plan for affordable housing, public transport, and social infrastructure that bridges inequality.
- ✚ Promote inclusive economic development by zoning for local markets, SMMEs, and emerging agriculture in rural areas.

Infrastructure – Development

NSDF Principle: Use infrastructure as a tool to catalyze development.

Implication: Thulamela SDF must:

- ✚ Align growth areas with existing and planned bulk infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads).
- ✚ Support nodal development where infrastructure capacity exists.
- ✚ Avoid low-density development that strains municipal service delivery.

Regional Integration and Border Management

NSDF Recognition: Emphasizes cross-border coordination, particularly near national boundaries.

Implication: Thulamela's proximity to Zimbabwe and Mozambique (via Kruger and Musina) may demand:

- ✚ Planning for regional logistics, trade, and agro-processing zones.
- ✚ Identifying opportunities for economic integration with neighbouring districts and provinces.

Table 2: TLM SDF Review alignment with NSDF, 2022

NSDF Principle	Implication for Thulamela SDF Review
Spatial Justice	Focus on equal access to land, housing, services in rural & urban parts
Resilience	Incorporate flood risks, climate response, environmental buffers
Spatial Efficiency	Encourage densification in Thohoyandou, prevent low-density sprawl
Integration	Plan for integrated transport, housing, and economic opportunities
Economic Inclusion	Unlock rural economy: small-scale farming, tourism, SMMEs
Governance	Improved coordination between traditional authorities & municipalities





- ✚ *Urban Edge Delineation around Thohoyandou and all other identified strategic development areas (SDAs – Rural Edge) nodes to control informal sprawl.*
- ✚ *Designation of local service centres (i.e., Tshikombani, Tshaulu) with tiered infrastructure investment.*
- ✚ *Identification of land reform projects and ensuring they are spatially integrated.*
- ✚ *Zoning for mixed-use development to support walkability and job access.*
- ✚ *Planning for intermodal hubs connecting villages to main urban and rural centres.*

In conclusion, the NSDF 2022 sets a clear policy direction for spatial transformation, and the Thulamela SDF Review must internalize and localize these goals. As a planner, this means:

- ✚ Using the NSDF's development corridors and spatial priorities to structure the municipal space.
- ✚ Driving social and spatial equity through localized implementation.

- ✚ Aligning infrastructure investment and land use to maximize efficiency, sustainability, and inclusivity.

2.4.6 National Development Plan, Vision 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030 is South Africa's overarching long-term strategy to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. It outlines how spatial planning, infrastructure investment, and inclusive economic growth must work together to transform South Africa's development landscape. The plan promotes spatial justice, sustainability, integration, and equity, which are central to reviewing and updating the TLM SDF

Spatial implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Prioritise spatial justice and redress in land use and service delivery*
- ✚ *Strengthen rural-urban linkages and support rural development*
- ✚ *Promote compact, sustainable, and integrated settlement patterns*
- ✚ *Align land use with strategic infrastructure investment*
- ✚ *Support land reform and tenure security, especially in communal areas*





- ✚ *Ensure environmental sustainability and resilience in spatial planning*

2.4.7 National Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2011 – 2014

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD 1) sets out South Africa's commitment to balancing environmental protection, social equity, and economic growth. Although its time frame was 2011–2014, the strategy laid the foundation for ongoing sustainable development planning and influences how municipality's structure spatial planning policies, including their SDFs. TLM includes both environmentally sensitive areas and socio-economically vulnerable communities, the principles of the NSSD remain highly relevant in shaping spatial development.

Spatial implication on the review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Promotes sustainable and environmentally responsible land use planning*
- ✚ *Requires protection and enhancement of natural ecosystems and green infrastructure*
- ✚ *Supports the integration of environmental sustainability into all spatial proposals*

- ✚ *Encourages resource-efficient infrastructure and climate-responsive planning*

- ✚ *Reinforces spatial equity and inclusive development in both urban and rural areas*

2.4.8 National Infrastructure Plan, 2050

The National Infrastructure Plan (NIP) 2050, adopted by the South African government in 2022, provides a long-term vision for coordinated, sustainable infrastructure development across sectors such as energy, water, transport, digital connectivity, and human settlements. It aims to guide strategic investment that unlocks inclusive economic growth and improves service delivery across all parts of the country, including rural municipalities like Thulamela. As the TLM SDF Review will be the primary spatial planning tool for guiding future development, it must align with and support the implementation of the NIP 2050.

Spatial implication on the review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Align with national and regional infrastructure corridors and development nodes*
- ✚ *Use infrastructure investment to drive spatial equity and service delivery*





- ✚ *Promote sustainable human settlement patterns linked to infrastructure availability*
- ✚ *Ensure land use planning is integrated with bulk infrastructure capacity*
- ✚ *Prepare for long-term infrastructure investment and funding mobilisation*
- ✚ *Support climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable development*

2.4.9 Industrial Policy Action Plan, 2012 – 2015

The Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) 2012–2015, developed by the Department of Trade and Industry (now known as the DTIC), aimed to revitalise South Africa’s manufacturing base, support labour-intensive sectors, and boost regional industrial development. While it was time-bound, its priorities continue to influence economic planning frameworks and have direct spatial implications for how local municipalities especially rural and developing ones like TLM structure their SDFs.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Allocate and zone land for industrial, agro-processing, and value-addition activities*

- ✚ *Support rural industrialisation linked to local agriculture and resources*
- ✚ *Align land use with infrastructure that supports production and trade*
- ✚ *Promote labour-intensive and inclusive economic land uses*
- ✚ *Plan for skills development infrastructure near economic hubs*
- ✚ *Ensure spatial equity in the distribution of industrial and economic opportunities*

2.4.10 Medium Term Development Plan, 2024 – 2029

Medium – Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024 – 2029, formerly known as the Medium – Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Align settlement, infrastructure, and transport networks to support integration and service delivery.*
- ✚ *Map and support rural nodes, land reform areas, and agricultural zones for coordinated investment.*
- ✚ *Prioritize affordable housing and settlement upgrading in proximity to economic hubs and services.*





- ✚ *Zone land for inclusive economic activity (markets, SMEs, agro-processing) linked to infrastructure.*
- ✚ *Ensure intergovernmental alignment by linking the SDF spatially with district, provincial, and national strategies, and embedding M&E provisions for implementation tracking*

2.4.11 Agricultural Policy Action Plan, 2015 – 2019

The Agricultural Policy Action Plan (APAP) 2015–2019, led by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), was designed to promote inclusive rural economic growth through improved agricultural production, agro-processing, land reform, and food security. While its timeline has passed, its priorities remain foundational to local economic development (LED) and have ongoing spatial planning implications for a rural municipality like TLM.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Map and protect high-potential agricultural land for production and land reform*
- ✚ *Zone areas for smallholder farming, agri-hubs, and rural support services*
- ✚ *Allocate land for agro-processing facilities and value-chain infrastructure*

- ✚ *Support land reform integration, tenure security, and inclusive rural development*
- ✚ *Promote peri-urban agriculture and food security initiatives in settlements*
- ✚ *Incorporate sustainable land and resource management principles into agricultural zones*

2.4.12 Integrated Urban Development Framework, 2016

The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) is South Africa's national policy aimed at guiding sustainable, inclusive, and integrated urban development. Although TLM includes a strong rural component, it also has growing urban centre like Thohoyandou a Regional Service Anchor according to NSDF, 2022, which requires spatial planning aligned with the IUDF's principles. The IUDF's vision "Liveable, Safe, Resource-Efficient Cities and Towns that are Socially Integrated, Economically Inclusive and Globally Competitive" has direct implications for how the Review of TLM SDF should be structured and implemented.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ *Promote compact, connected, and mixed-use urban growth in Thohoyandou and service centres*





- ✚ Strengthen urban – rural integration to support balanced spatial development
- ✚ Align infrastructure planning with spatial growth patterns to improve efficiency
- ✚ Support inclusive economic development and job creation through spatial interventions
- ✚ Enhance liveability, accessibility, and safety across all settlements
- ✚ Integrate climate resilience and sustainability into spatial planning frameworks

2.4.13 Spatial Industrial Development Strategy, 2025 – 2035

Spatial Industrial Development Strategy promotes industrial development in targeted regions through policies, strategies and programmes such as Special Economic Zones and Industrial Parks, Spatial Industrial Development, Spatial Development Initiatives, etc. The strategy focuses on identifying and developing regions with economic potential, near transport networks, by providing incentives and infrastructure to attract businesses, which leads to the creation of jobs, increased economic activity and a more balanced national economic landscape.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- ✚ Promotion of Industrial nodes and corridors within TLM

- ✚ Ensure spatial justice and inclusivity within its jurisdiction
- ✚ Identify urban-rural linkages
- ✚ Integration with transport infrastructure
- ✚ A balanced distribution of employment opportunities within TLM

2.4.14 Summary of National Policy Framework

National policy framework provides the overarching direction for development, governance, and spatial transformation across all spheres of government.

In TLM, these policies guide local planning, budgeting, land-use decisions, and service delivery priorities. Moreover, assist TLM in planning its spatial development, managing resources, protecting the environment, and improving living conditions.

It further ensures that local strategies are aligned with South Africa's national development goals and spatial transformation agenda.





2.5 PROVINCIAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

Provincial policies in South Africa serve the purpose of enabling the provinces to manage local affairs, implement national policies and address specific needs within their districts as well as local municipalities. Moreover, they also provide a framework for provincial planning whilst ensuring alignment with national policy directives.

2.5.1 Limpopo State of the Province Address, 2025

The Premier of Limpopo Province, the Honourable Dr Phophi Ramathuba outlined a few things with reference to spatial planning and said:

Following the Cabinet's approval of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP 2024–2029), the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP 2025–2030) was reviewed through an inclusive, participatory process involving municipalities and the private sector. The LDP serves as a strategic blueprint to drive sustainable growth, economic resilience, and social upliftment in the province. It implements the NDP, Vision 2030 and guides provincial departments, municipalities, and the private sector in collaborating to address key challenges like unemployment, poverty, and inequality, with a strong emphasis on inclusive development for all.

- ✚ We need to actively promote industrialisation particularly in manufacturing, agriculture, and construction to drive inclusive growth and job creation. These sectors can boost economic growth and provide employment opportunities, especially for low-skilled workers.*
- ✚ We plan to expand macadamia and avocado farming in Vhembe, specifically within Thulamela Municipality, through the Senzi Avomacs Farming initiative.*
- ✚ We have invested in the future by enrolling practitioners at the University of Venda to study for a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development.*
- ✚ The 2025 State of the Province Address highlights infrastructure growth, industrialization, and manufacturing, which will be prioritized in the TLMSDF review*

2.5.2 The Limpopo Development Plan (LDP), 2025 – 2030

The LDP, 2025-2030 is a strategic blueprint designed to propel Limpopo province towards sustainable growth, economic resilience and social upliftment. Moreover, it serves as an implementation instrument of the NDP, Vision 2030.

Secondly this is a guiding framework for provincial departments and municipalities, including the private sector, fostering collaboration





across sectors to tackle critical challenges such as economic growth, economic infrastructure provision, unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF will most likely include:

-  *Alignment with Provincial Growth Priorities: Ensuring land use and spatial planning support the LDP's focus on infrastructure expansion, industrialization, and economic development across Limpopo.*
-  *Zoning for Industrial and Manufacturing Hubs: Designating specific areas within TLM for industrial and manufacturing activities to promote economic growth and job creation.*
-  *Infrastructure Development: Planning for improved transport networks, utilities, and services that connect key economic nodes and residential areas, supporting increased development density where appropriate.*
-  *Balanced Urban and Rural Development: Addressing spatial inequalities by integrating rural development initiatives while strengthening urban centres in line with LDP's strategic goals.*

-  *Sustainable Land Use: Incorporating environmental and social considerations to guide growth without degrading natural resources, supporting long-term resilience.*
-  *Enhanced Service Delivery: Spatially prioritizing areas for improved access to education, health, and social amenities in line with the development plan's goals.*

In a nutshell, the TLMSDF Review will spatially orient planning to support the LDP's vision for inclusive, infrastructure-led growth and industrialization within Limpopo Province, VDM and TLM.

2.5.3 The Limpopo SDF (LSDF), 2025

The Limpopo SDF (LSDF) is a strategic planning document developed by the Limpopo Provincial Government to guide spatial planning and development across the province. It serves as a provincial blueprint that aligns with national and local development plans, ensuring coordinated and sustainable growth.

In April 2025, the Limpopo Executive Council approved the LSDF 2025, emphasizing its role in aligning the LDP 2025–2030 with provincial and municipal SDFs. This approval mandates the Review of DSDFs and MSDFs to ensure they are sequenced and aligned with the provincial framework.





Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF include:

- + Regional Integration: The TLMSDF must align with the LSDF's regional spatial priorities to promote coordinated development across Limpopo, ensuring TLM fits into broader provincial growth corridors and nodes.*
- + Settlement Hierarchy and Growth Management: The LSDF's guidelines on settlement hierarchy/typology will influence the Review of TLMSDF's planning for urban growth, focusing development in designated growth points and managing rural settlement expansion.*
- + Infrastructure and Service Provision: The Review of TLMSDF should prioritize infrastructure and service delivery in line with the LSDF's strategic spatial projects to improve connectivity and accessibility within the municipality and beyond.*
- + Environmental Sustainability: The LSDF's emphasis on protecting ecological assets will require the Review of TLMSDF to integrate environmental management and conservation areas into spatial planning decisions.*
- + Economic Development Focus: Supporting the LSDF's economic development zones by facilitating land use patterns that encourage industrial, agricultural, and tourism activities.*

- + Spatial Equity: Addressing spatial disparities highlighted by the LSDF by promoting inclusive development and improved access to social services across all communities.*

Overall, the LSDF (2024) provides a strategic provincial framework that will guide the TLMSDF Review to ensure spatial coherence, sustainable growth, and balanced development within Thulamela Municipality.

2.5.4 Limpopo Green Economy Plan 2013

The spatial implications of the Limpopo Green Economy Plan (LGEP) 2013 in the Review of the TLMSDF focus on integrating sustainability, low-carbon development, and environmental resilience into local spatial planning.

- + Promotion of Sustainable Land Use and Environmental Protection
 - *LGEP Focus: Emphasizes conservation of biodiversity, sustainable land management, and limiting urban sprawl.*
 - *TLMSDF Review Implication: The review must clearly define and protect environmentally sensitive areas (i.e. wetlands, forests, river systems) and integrate ecological corridors into the municipal spatial structure to support resilience.**





Renewable Energy Integration

- *LGEP Focus: Encourages investment in renewable energy such as solar, biomass, and small hydro projects.*
- *TLMSDF Review Implication: Identify and allocate land for renewable energy infrastructure (i.e. solar farms in underutilized rural land), and ensure spatial support for green energy development, especially in off-grid and rural areas.*

Sustainable Human Settlements

- *LGEP Focus: Promotes compact, mixed-use development to reduce carbon emissions and improve service efficiency.*
- *TLMSDF Review Implication: Guide settlement patterns to encourage densification in strategic development areas (SDAs) for example around Thohoyandou (a Regional Service Anchor according to NSDF, 2022), reduce reliance on car travel, and integrate green public spaces and non-motorized transport routes.*

Waste and Resource Management

- *LGEP Focus: Supports green waste management systems, recycling, and circular economy principles.*
- *TLMSDF Review Implication: Designate land for sustainable waste facilities (i.e. recycling centres,*

composting sites), and integrate circular economy principles into the spatial economy strategy of the municipality.

Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services

- *LGEP Focus: Emphasizes the role of green infrastructure (parks, trees, permeable surfaces) in adapting to climate change and improving quality of life.*
- *TLMSDF Review Implication: Incorporate green belts, urban greening, and stormwater management systems into local planning, particularly in expanding townships and informal areas.*

Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

- *LGEP Focus: Reduces vulnerability to climate-related hazards (i.e. drought, floods).*
- *TLMSDF Review Implication: Identify high-risk zones, restrict development in flood-prone or degraded areas, and include spatial policies for climate resilience and disaster risk planning.*

2.5.5 Limpopo Environmental Management Act 7 of 2003 (LEMA)

This Act makes provision with respect to the protection and conservation of the environment in the Limpopo Province. It makes





provision for a wide variety of matters regarding the environment, including:

- + protected areas.
- + hunting of wild and exotic animals.
- + the establishment of Wildlife Councils.
- + inland fishing and the protection and aquatic systems.
- + the protection of indigenous plants, the application of CITES.
- + restrictions on development and environmental impact reports.
- + declaration and protection of mountain catchment areas.
- + environmental pollution.
- + and the protection of biodiversity in general.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

- + *Restricts development in sensitive areas within TLM.*
- + *Promotes eco-tourism and green economy opportunities while ensuring responsible use of natural resources within TLM.*
- + *Requires EIAs for major projects, guiding the SDF to integrate environmental safeguards.*

2.5.6 Summary of Provincial Policy Framework

Provincial policy framework in Limpopo provides a strategic guidance for development planning and resource allocation at both provincial and municipal levels. These frameworks ensure alignment with national priorities while addressing Limpopo's unique socio-economic and

environmental context. To guide TLM in aligning their SDF (i.e. the review of TLMSDF) with provincial goals ensuring sustainable, inclusive, and economically viable development across the province.





2.6 DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY POLICY FRAMEWORK

The primary purpose of district policy directives in South Africa is basically to improve service delivery and drive sustainable development within the district and local municipalities within the particular district.

2.6.1 Vhembe District Municipality Spatial Development Framework (VDM SDF), 2019 – 2025

Key spatial implications of the VDM SDF (2019 – 2025) on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Addressing Spatial Fragmentation and Inefficiency

- VDM SDF Diagnosis: The district faces "skewed and scattered settlement patterns" and "fragmented, unequal, incoherent and inefficient" land use
- TLMSDF Review Implication: TLM must reconfigure its spatial structure encouraging integrated, nodal development rather than isolated or sprawling rural settlements, and aligning public investment accordingly.

Enhancing Equity and Service Accessibility

- VDM Goals: Reduce social and infrastructure disparities across urban and rural communities.

- TLMSDF Review Implication: Strategically target under-served localities (i.e. Tshaulu, Ha-Makuya and other rural areas) with service delivery, densification, and support for rural growth points to empower marginalised communities.

Strategic Infrastructure Investment

- VDM Directives: Identify spatial priorities to guide public sector investments
- TLMSDF Review Implication: Map and prioritise major infrastructure corridors (i.e. roads, bulk services) to stimulate economic hubs and seal gaps in service delivery, informed by district-level sequencing.

Strengthening Rural Resource Management

- VDM SDF Role: Rural areas require attention to natural resource management, land tenure, and agricultural land protection
- TLMSDF Review Implication: Carefully zone prime agricultural land, address land ownership challenges within the former homeland as well as within the TLM





municipal boundary, and integrate environmental conservation into rural land use plans.

Conserving Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

- VDM Context: With 68 protected areas including Kruger and Mapungubwe biodiversity corridors are vital according to Vhembe Bioregional Plan.
- TLMSDF Review Implication: Incorporate spatial buffers and ecological corridors to protect biodiversity zones and integrate ecosystem considerations into land use decision-making.

Aligning Spatial Vision and SDF Hierarchies

- VDM SDF Function: Acts as strategic, indicative spatial framework guiding precinct plans/local SDFs and land use schemes
- TLMSDF Review Implication: Ensure the TLM vision, spatial framework, and land use schemes are directly informed by VDMs strategic guidelines, ensuring vertical alignment and coherence with provincial and national spatial priorities.

2.6.2 Vhembe District Municipality Integrated Development Plan (VDM IDP) 2022 – 2027

The VDM IDP (2022 – 2027) sets broad goals around service delivery, economic development, environmental sustainability, and aligning spatial planning across its local municipalities (MLM, MKLM, TLM, and CCLM)

Key spatial implications of the VDM IDP (2022 – 2027) on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Strengthened Vertical and Horizontal Alignment

The IDP emphasizes strong alignment between district-level strategies and precinct plans to avoid conflicting land-use priorities for TLM, that means TLMSDF must actively incorporate 1. district-wide infrastructure corridors, 2. conservation priorities, 3. nodal economic zones, and 4. environmental management policies.

Focus on Nodal and Corridor-Based Growth

- The VDM IDP pushes for growth directed into nodes, towns and corridors where capital infrastructure investments can yield efficiencies and densify settlements near economic and service hubs (i.e. Thohoyandou a Regional Service Anchor).





- The TLM SDF should refine which nodes (i.e., Thohoyandou, Tshaulu, Tshilamba and so forth) are targeted, and the development typologies inclusive of residential, commercial, industrial should be directed along key transport arteries (i.e. R524, R523 and so forth).

Conservation and Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The VDM IDP stresses safeguarding key environmental landscapes, including protected areas and biodiversity corridors and this is also highlighted on the VBP.

- TLM SDF needs to map these zones and guide development away from critical conservation areas inclusive of CBAs and ESAs.

Informal Settlement Management & Infrastructure Targeting

The VDM IDP explicitly highlights informal settlement expansion and service backlogs. TLMSDF must pinpoint informal settlement hotspots and propose corridor-based, phased economic infrastructure upgrades (water, sanitation, solid waste, roads).

Economically Targeted Land Use

The VDM IDP promotes economic growth by targeting agriculture, tourism, mining, and small industry.

- TLMSDF must spatially designate land for agro-processing, eco-tourism, SMME zones, and ensure connectivity between rural, peri urban and urban economies especially in the current identified nodal points or SDAs in TLM.

Emphasis on Sustainable Settlement Patterns

The VDM IDP's vision includes equity, efficiency, integration, and sustainable development through reducing sprawl (urban and rural)

- TLMSDF should encourage settlement consolidation or clustering around existing nodes/SDAs, also promote mixed-use development, and prevent leapfrog expansion into rural areas.

Implementation & Monitoring

The VDM IDP mandates annual IDP/SDF Reviews to ensure operations match long-term spatial goals.

- The TLMSDF Review needs to be integrated into each annual VDM and TLM IDP cycle, with progress tracked across economic infrastructure, settlement, environmental, and economic indicators.





2.6.3 Vhembe District Municipality Local Economic Development (VDM LED) 2021 – 2031

The Vhembe District LED Strategy (2021–2031) is a collaborative plan to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality by promoting inclusive, innovation-driven economic growth across all four local municipalities.

Key spatial implications of the VDM LED (2021 – 2031) on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Regional Economic Corridors & Cross-Border Integration

VDM LED strategy emphasises leveraging its strategic location bordering Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Botswana to boost trade and tourism.

- *TLMSDF Review should designate spatial zones along major border routes (i.e. along the R524 and R523 joining the N1 to Beitbridge in MLM) as economic corridors, facilitating Cross-Border business parks, logistics hubs, and tourism gateways.*

Cluster-Based SMME and Resource-Led Development

The VDM LED plan promotes “location-based clusters” focusing on small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) especially those driven by local resources and communities

- The TLMSDF review must identify and map emerging economic clusters in Tshaulu, Tshilamba, and other rural centres that have been designated as nodes or SDAs. These areas should be strategically zoned to support agro-processing, craft industries, tourism lodges, and township/rural businesses.

Addressing High Youth Unemployment Through Spatial Planning

With youth unemployment extremely high (and this will be further highlighted in the next phase), VDM LED calls for training centres and workshops.

- *TLMSDF Review should mandate educational and skills training facilities within mixed-use nodes and corridors as identified in the current TLMSDF (2019 – 2023), ensuring physical access to employment hubs and transport.*

Equity-Driven Targeting of Marginalised Communities

The VDM LED plan specifically targets marginalized groups (women, unemployed, landless, emerging entrepreneurs and so forth)

- *TLMSDF Review must embed spatial equity by allocating land and economic infrastructure support in under-*





resourced peri-urban and rural areas, (i.e., protective zoning for women-led farming hubs or youth start-ups as well as cooperatives within TLM boundary).

Alignment with Spatial Restructuring & Settlement Cohesion

The VDM SDF acknowledges dysfunctional, fragmented settlements and uneven service/infrastructure delivery within its municipal boundaries

- *TLMSDF Review would have to reinforce 1. spatial integration which will link isolated settlements especially those around Tshilamba SDA to other economic nodes through upgraded transport and utilities corridors, 2. cluster informal settlements near growth nodes, and 3. avoid leapfrog development.*

Conservation-Economy Balance Along Biodiversity Corridors

The VDM LED strategy is set within a region rich in protected areas (i.e., Mapungubwe, Soutpansberg, Kruger and so forth), requiring biodiversity conservation that supports eco-tourism LED initiatives as outlined in the VBP.

- *TLMSDF Review should prioritise zoning buffer areas and*

- *eco-tourism corridors, integrating spatial overlays for biodiversity protection alongside tourism-led development.*

2.6.4 Vhembe Adaptation Plan (VAP), 2024

VAP aims to equip VDM with a comprehensive strategy to reduce vulnerability and exposure to climate change impacts, while promoting sustainable development and resilience across the district.

Key spatial implications of the VAP on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Climate Risk Mapping: Rainfall Variability & Flooding

The VAP highlights increasing extremes more intense rainfall events and flooding under high-emission scenarios through to 2050

- *TLMSDF Review must highlight and incorporate flood-risk zones along rivers and low-lying areas into spatial maps further indicating settlements in CBAs.*
- *Secondly prioritize these areas for green infrastructure (i.e., retention basins), restrict development (i.e., residential development and so forth), and locate critical social infrastructure (i.e., schools, clinics and so forth) on safer, elevated ground.*





Shifting Biomes & Ecosystem Resilience

Recent Climate models indicate biome shifts across VDM, affecting vegetation types and ecosystem boundaries.

- *TLMSDF Review must update land-use zoning to reflect these shifts and overlay vulnerable biome areas and plan conservation buffers thereby encouraging ecological restoration corridors that maintain ecosystem connectivity as biomes migrate.*

Water Energy Food (WEF) Nexus & Indigenous Knowledge Integration

The VAP recommends embedding WEF – smart innovations and indigenous practices in spatial planning.

- *TLMSDF Review will have to identify and zone multifunctional landscapes such as community-managed woodlands that deliver food, fuel, and water retention benefits. Incentivize agroforestry and water harvesting through mapped resilience zones throughout the municipal boundaries.*

Community – Based Forest & Biodiversity Management

- *TLMSDF Review should spatially designate community-managed forest and biodiversity areas. Ensuring that they are*

legally recognized within precinct plans/zoning documents/LUMS and strengthen corridors connecting protected areas (i.e., Thathe Vondo Forest and others).

Sustainable Rural Livelihood Zones

Various studies have shown that peri urban and rural households are now adopting to livelihood diversification inclusive of rainwater tanks, livestock, indigenous agriculture for resilience.

- *TLMSDF Review will have to map peri urban and rural zones for livelihood support (i.e., sites for communal water harvesting, small-scale livestock, or indigenous crop plots). These should be shielded from future urban land grabs as well as future urban extensions and integrated into the reviewed spatial framework for TLM.*

The District Development Model promotes a unified approach to planning in VDM, helping align municipal development priorities and reduce fragmented service delivery. It strengthens coordination of land-use decisions, infrastructure investment, and settlement development across the district.

Spatial implications include:

-  *Aligned SDFs across all local municipalities, creating a single spatial direction.*





- ✚ *Strengthening of economic corridors and growth nodes, especially the N1 corridor and the Musina-Makhado SEZ.*
- ✚ *Encouraging more compact, organised rural settlements, reducing costs of servicing dispersed villages.*
- ✚ *More integrated bulk infrastructure planning, improving connectivity and service coverage.*
- ✚ *Better protection of environmentally sensitive areas, including the Vhembe Biosphere, through coordinated land-use control*

2.6.5 Summary of VDM Policy Framework

VDM guides TLM spatial development by integrating traditional and urban land use, prioritizing economic infrastructure (water, sanitation, transport), promoting agricultural and rural economic hubs, ensuring environmental sustainability, and enforcing inclusive, community driven planning.





2.7 THULAMELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY POLICY FRAMEWORK

The primary purpose of local municipalities in South Africa is to ensure the provision of effective and sustainable services to communities, promote social and economic development, fostering a safe and healthy environment.

Moreover, it includes implementing policies that prioritize basic community needs, participate in national and provincial development programmes including district programmes, and therefore encourage community involvement in local government matters

2.7.1 Thulamela Spatial Planning and Land Use Management By-Laws, 2016

The 2016 TLM SPLUM By-Laws make the TLMSDF under Review both strategic and legally enforceable. The SDF must be comprehensive, transparent, and auditable and firmly anchored in law, public engagement, spatial clarity, and environmental responsibility.

Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Legal Binding of the TLMSDF

The Thulamela SPLUM By-Laws, 2016 mandates that land development decisions must align with the TLMSDF, unless specific, site-based exceptions (i.e., pre-existing uses or precinct plans/local area

plans) apply. Any deviation requires strict justification and must be recorded.

- *TLMSDF Review must ensure that is precise and legally robust, and then clarify where and why deviations are permissible and establish a system for documenting them within their spatial framework.*

Mandatory Content and Strategic Scope

SPLUMA aligned with Thulamela SPLUM By-Laws, 2016 requires TLMSDFs to include elements such as 1. spatial growth vision (5 – 20years), 2. corridors and economic nodes, 3. housing and population demand, 4. infrastructure needs, 5. environmental sensitivities, 6. incremental upgrading zones/SDAs, and 7. implementation plans with budgeting and institutional roles or a capital expenditure framework.

- *TLMSDF Review should verify that these required spatial elements are comprehensively mapped and articulated thereby, strengthening representations around corridors, nodes, environmental zones, and service delivery phasing throughout the municipal boundary.*

Hierarchy of Plans & Integration





The Thulamela SPLUMA By-Laws, 2016 emphasize that TLM SDF is part of a “package of plans” including precinct plans, local area plans, and land-use schemes and so forth.

- *TLMSDF Review should ensure alignment and clear progression to more detailed local area plans and future precinct-specific plans for SDAs identified and also highlight those mechanisms for integrated planning and sequencing.*

Public Participation and Transparency

Adoption and amendments of the TLMSDF require public notices, 60-day comment periods, and transparency via publication in the local newspapers and the Provincial Gazette in two official languages.

- *TLMSDF Review must embed structured public engagement steps in this review process and also ensure proper notice, accessible public feedback channels, and full documentation of public participation outcomes.*

Monitoring Deviations & Tribunal Oversight

All departures from the TLMSDF must be registered by the TLM, with site specific justifications.

- *TLMSDF Review should also implement a deviation monitoring system with regular audits which should review*

Municipal Planning Tribunal (MPT) decisions and flag patterns that may require TLMSDF adjustments or Thulamela SPLUMA By-Laws amendments.

Environmental Pressures & Land-Use Constraints

TLMSDF must identify environmental sensitivities and unsuitable zones for development (i.e., floodplains, biodiversity pressure points).

- *TLMSDF Review must integrate high-resolution environmental mapping such as riparian buffers, steep slopes, and heritage overlays into core spatial maps and zoning tables in the Status Quo Analysis report.*

2.7.2 Thulamela Local Municipality Urban Development and Revitalisation Framework, 2016

Through the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG), TLM has compiled its Urban Development and Revitalization Framework for its major activity nodes, which are Thohoyandou and Sibasa, generally referred to as Thulamela Gateway Project. This Thulamela Gateway Project entails the creation of two new retail and community service nodes with road links and public transport facilities.

The first node is the extension of the existing CBD in Thohoyandou to the south of the provincial road R524. The second node is at Sibasa. The Thulamela Gateway Project focused more on opening up new





areas. The retail components will be driven largely by private sector investment.

Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Urban Regeneration & Brownfield Focus

The 2016 framework emphasizes revitalizing underutilized urban areas and encouraging higher-density, mixed-use redevelopment instead of Greenfield sprawl.

- *TLMSDF Review must identify priority regeneration zones (e.g., sections of Thohoyandou and Sibasa CBD), promote infill development, and adjust density and land-use provisions accordingly.*

Transit-Oriented Development & Corridor Strengthening

The TLM Urban Development and Revitalisation Framework, prioritizes structured growth along major roads, public transport routes, and activity corridors to support compact, accessible urban and peri urban forms.

- *TLMSDF Review should map and strengthen development along key spines Thohoyandou to Tshaulu and Tshilamba, also provide extension corridors integrating multimodal transport, pedestrian amenities with nodal upgrades.*

Public Space & Pedestrian Prioritization

Revitalisation includes improving pedestrian corridors, streetscape upgrades, public malls/plazas, and widespread access throughout the identified nodes.

- *TLMSDF Review should spatially designate pedestrian streetscape zones and incorporate infrastructure plans (benches, lighting, street trees and so forth) adjacent to development nodes in the spatial proposal's maps.*

Sequenced Implementation & Infrastructure Phasing

The TLM Urban Development and Revitalisation Framework, 2016 document calls for clear sequencing of interventions such as infrastructure upgrades, public realm improvements, and private-sector investment in phases.

- *TLMSDF Review must overlay implementation phasing on spatial proposals maps showing or identifying priority precincts, planned infrastructure upgrades, and expected private investment timelines for the next 5 – 20 years.*

Stakeholder Integration in Revitalisation Areas

The TLM Urban Development and Revitalisation Framework, 2016 further highlights the need for integrated planning with utilities, trade, safety, accessibility, and landowners in targeted precincts or SDAs.





- *TLMSDF should also map precincts/SDAs requiring cross-sector/sector departments collaboration, i.e., transport nodes, safety corridors and establish frameworks to attract Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) or special development zones.*

Legal & Regulatory Revisions for Revitalisation

Enabling densification and corridor development may require overlay zones, incentive-based zoning, streamlined land-use permissions and public-private partnerships (PPPs).

- *TLMSDF Review must identify zones/areas where land-use management schemes and Thulamela SPLUM By-Laws as other spatial planning tools within the municipality should be incorporated and grouped into revitalisation precincts looking at aging activity nodes and so forth.*

2.7.3 Thulamela Local Municipality Integrated Development Plan Review, 2024/25 – 2026/27

The TLM IDP is the municipality's five-year strategic plan that directs development and service delivery within Thulamela. It identifies key priorities such as infrastructure development, housing, local economic growth, environmental management and improved basic services.

Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Implementation of Development Corridors & Nodes

The TLM IDP Review 2024/25 – 2026/27 highlights key development corridors and nodes as strategic growth anchors, mapped as primary and secondary zones that facilitate focused socio-economic activity

- *TLMSDF Review must accurately spatially map and zone these corridors (e.g., main roads linking Thohoyandou, Tshilamba and so forth) and other identified nodes to prioritize economic infrastructure, land-use mix, and targeted upgrades.*

GIS-Based Spatial Planning Integration

The TLM IDP Review 2024/25 – 2026/27 stresses the role of the TLM GIS system in profiling demographics, service backlogs, asset location, and emergency routes.

- *TLMSDF Review must embed GIS layers directly using geospatial data for ratepayers, services, assets, and response networks, in order to shape spatial priorities and monitor infrastructure delivery over time.*

Addressing Environmental, Health & Risk Concerns

The TLM IDP Review 2024/25 – 2026/27 flags informal encroachment especially in peri urban areas and rural areas into





sensitive areas and environmental risks such as erosion and unplanned settlement.

- *TLMSDF Review should overlay environmental sensitivity maps such as steep slopes, water courses, erosion pressure points onto land-use zones and also Introduce buffer zones and restrict development in high-risk areas (i.e., flood prone areas).*

Phased Infrastructure & Capital Investment Alignment

Following SPLUMA and national guidelines/priorities, the TLM IDP Review 2024/25 – 2026/27 directs that TLMSDF should link closely to capital expenditure budgets and phasing

- *TLMSDF Review must align spatial phasing to investment plans, mapping short – long term infrastructure rollouts tied to corridors and nodes, ensuring that spatial development aligns with funded projects (i.e., WSIG, MIG and other Government Grants).*

Strengthening Spatial Justice & Inclusion

Consistent with SPLUMA and TLM IDP Review 2024/25 – 2026/27 commitments, the healthy use of TLMSDF is fundamental for delivering equitable spatial outcomes and reversing apartheid era fragmentation.

- *TLMSDF Review should spatially prioritize historically underserved areas such as Lwamondo, Tshaulu, Ha- Makuya and so forth with mixed-use clusters linking them to major nodes, and legally secure spaces for incremental, affordable housing and community/social facilities.*

2.7.4 Thulamela Local Municipal Spatial Development Framework, (TLMSDF, 2019 – 2023)

Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Reinforcement of Nodes, Corridors & Surfaces

The 2019–2023 TLMSDF followed a nodal, corridor and surface model defining functional areas for human settlements and growth, thereby emphasizing mixed use activity nodes at transit intersections and structured settlement corridors.

- *TLMSDF Review should retain and refine these structuring elements by updating the priority nodes and corridors based on evolving travel patterns, economic activity, and service needs.*

Brownfield & Infill Prioritization

The TLMSDF 2019 – 2023 emphasized consolidation by promoting Infill over Greenfield expansion and reinforcing settlement edges to curb leapfrog development.





- *TLMSDF Review must strengthen municipal policies to advance brownfield projects, tighten development edges, and review suitability criteria for site consolidation opportunities.*

Public Realm & Pedestrian Focus

The TLMSDF 2019 – 2023 highlighted the need for public infrastructure such as pedestrian-friendly streets, plazas/malls and structured public investment within identified nodes.

- *TLMSDF Review should spatially prioritise public realm enhancement zones, ensuring these align with pedestrian accessible nodes and transit intersections.*

Alignment with SPLUMA Spatial Structuring Elements

The TLMSDF 2019 – 2023 aligned with SPLUMA's provincial spatial priorities approach, ensuring consistency in zoning and development orientation.

- *TLMSDF Review must revisit zoning regulations and align land-use scheme updates accordingly also ensuring new precincts reflect SPLUMA structuring principles.*

Settlement Edge Management & Infrastructure Efficiency

The TLMSDF 2019 – 2023 introduced settlement edges to manage infrastructure extension and promote densification in established settlements.

- *TLMSDF Review has to reaffirm these edges spatially, secondly re-assess infrastructure capacity along these edges, lastly re-align investment plans to target high-density consolidation zones.*

Inter-municipal relations & Regional Governance

The TLMSDF 2019 – 2023 called for coordination with VDM and Limpopo provincial spatial plans to avoid spatial fragmentation and align vertical planning efforts.

- *TLMSDF Review has to overlay higher-order structuring elements (i.e., provincial corridors, district nodes and so forth) to ensure seamless integration within provincial and municipal spatial planning policies for alignment purposes.*

2.7.5 Thulamela Local Municipality Local Economic Development Strategy

The TLM LED Strategy, provides critical guidance for refining the TLMSDF, moreover emphasizes resource-based, inclusive, and spatially targeted economic development.





Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Spatial Targeting of Economic Clusters

TLM LED Strategy focus promotion of spatially defined economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism, SMMEs and services.

TLMSDF Review must:

- *Identify and map agro-processing nodes (i.e., areas with commercial agriculture or irrigation potential like Makonde, Mutale and so forth).*
- *Demarcate tourism development corridors (i.e., Punda Maria, Kruger NP, TLM heritage routes).*
- *Protect and enable land for small business zones (i.e., informal trading areas, industrial parks in Thohoyandou, Sibasa, and Tshilamba).*

Infrastructure-Led Development Corridors

TLM LED Strategy focused on Infrastructure gaps (i.e., roads, energy, broadband) which limit enterprise growth in rural and semi-urban areas.

TLMSDF Review must:

- *Prioritise infrastructure investment along key development corridors (i.e., R524 and routes connecting Thohoyandou to Tshilamba and other nodes in TLM).*

- *Zone these corridors for mixed-use development with service-based and light industrial uses.*

Inclusive Economic Zoning

TLM LED Strategy Focuses on targeted support for youth, women, and disadvantaged communities.

TLMSDF Review must:

- *Spatially prioritise township and rural development nodes (i.e., Shayandima, Phiphidi, Tshitereke and so forth) for enterprise incubators, informal trading infrastructure, and training centres.*
- *Identify inclusion zones in land-use maps, where land and infrastructure are reserved or incentivized for historically excluded groups.*

Leveraging Natural and Cultural Assets

TLM LED Strategy Focuses on the use of TLM biodiversity, heritage, and landscapes to drive eco-tourism and green economy initiatives.

TLMSDF Review must:

- *Protect and promote spatial areas rich in biodiversity (i.e., Thathe Vondo Forest, Nwanedi Reserve and so forth) as well as cultural heritage (i.e. , Dzata Ruins).*





- Introduce eco-tourism corridors and buffer zones in spatial plans.

Economic Precincts and SMME Zones

LED Strategy Focuses on creating functional, accessible zones for informal traders, cooperatives, and micro-enterprises.

TLMSDF Review must:

- Zone urban centres (especially Thohoyandou, Tshilamba, Tshaulu) with dedicated SMME hubs and mixed-use precincts.
- Plan land for new or upgraded local markets and light industrial zones close to high-density areas.

2.7.6 Thulamela Local Municipality Adaptation Plan, 2024

Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Flood and Water Related Risks (Malaria & Rainfall)

TLMSDF Review must:

- Zone for stormwater management systems, swales, and retention areas.
- Map and avoid locations at high malaria risk when siting schools, clinics, and residences.

Emergency Planning & Security

TLMSDF Review must:

- Integrate crime hotspots/pressure points (i.e., Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshilamba) into public space and infrastructure planning for example, by situating public/social facilities in safer zones.
- Use lighting and surveillance-aware design in pedestrian and public realm areas.

Broader Climate Adaptation Best Practices

TLMSDF Review must:

- Designate climate resilience nodes inclusive of areas with green buffers, wetlands, and relief systems.
- Apply environmental zoning overlays identifying flood prone land and restrict development in those areas.
- Allocate zones for community-based adaptation like rainwater harvesting or agroforestry.

2.7.7 Thulamela Local Municipality Land Use Scheme, 2020

TLM Land Use Scheme (2020) and its ongoing review have direct and significant spatial implications for the Review of TLMSDF.

Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Clear Zoning for Agriculture vs. Built-Up Areas





TLMSDF Review must:

- Introduce distinct zoning categories like "arable-use" or "subsistence farming" zones to clearly protect prime agricultural land.
- Map and safeguard core agricultural lands especially in customary tenure areas against rural urban expansion.

Aligning Zoning with SDF Objectives

TLMSDF Review must:

- Ensure that all zoning categories in the scheme are consistent with the SDF's spatial objectives (i.e., nodal and corridor development, conservation and agriculture).
- Create overlay or special zones for targeted priorities (e.g., heritage, environmental buffers, SDAs).

Safeguarding Rural and Subsistence Livelihoods

The loss of agricultural land underscores the need for the Land Use Scheme to differentiate subsistence farming from built-up areas and speculative land.

TLMSDF Review must:

- Include subsistence and small-scale farming zones on the spatial proposals' maps.
- Draw urban and rural edges and growth boundaries to avoid unchecked rural sprawl that undermines livelihoods.

2.7.8 Thulamela Housing Sector Plan

The TLM Housing Sector Plan impetuses the TLMSDF to function as a spatial delivery tool which is prioritizing infill, accessibility, inclusion, and risk-aware development with phased implementation tied to resources.

Spatial Implications on the Review of the TLMSDF:

Prioritizing Well-Located and Integrated Housing

The TLM Housing Sector Plan emphasizes housing developments that are close to economic opportunities, public transport, and existing amenities rather than peripheral greenfield expansion.

TLMSDF Review must:

- Spatially prioritize infill and densification within existing nodes (Thohoyandou and Sibasa).
- Reflect this with priority housing zones in areas with sufficient service capacity and accessibility.





Inclusionary and Mixed-Income Housing

TLM Housing Sector Plan promotes inclusionary housing principles: integrating various income groups, ensuring proximity to jobs and services, and embedding social amenities like parks and schools.

TLMSDF Review should:

- *Allocate mixed-use residential zones with mandatory inclusionary provisions specific land parcels earmarked for affordable/social housing.*
- *Map locations for social/community amenities, ensuring new housing precincts are supported by schools, clinics, and public spaces.*

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

The TLM Housing Sector Plan supports locating housing along existing or planned public transport corridors to reduce transport costs and improve access.

TLMSDF Review must:

- *Identify TOD corridors in SDF proposals maps adjacent to high-frequency bus routes or taxi ranks.*
- *Enable medium to high density residential zoning in these areas.*

Land Availability & Serviced Stands

TLMSDF Review must:

- *Map serviced stand zones and land parcels with basic infrastructure (i.e., roads, water, sanitation).*
- *Include buffer and expansion areas aligned with municipal servicing programs and capital budgets.*

Environmental and Risk-Sensitive Siting

The TLM Housing Sector Plan requires environmentally sound housing avoiding floodplains, steep slopes, and unsafe areas.

TLMSDF Review should:

- *Incorporate risk-sensitive development zones with housing permitted only outside environmentally constrained or hazardous areas (flood and erosion prone areas).*
- *Overlay environmental constraints on proposed housing development zones.*

-  *Phased Implementation Linked to Resources* Housing delivery is staged based on funding cycles, service capacity, and demand analysis.





TLMSDF Review should:

- *Align spatial phasing maps with the TLM Housing Sector Plan implementation phases (short – long term priority).*
- *Link phasing to infrastructure availability and municipal capital budget schedules.*

2.7.9 Thulamela Density Policy, 2022

The 2022 TLM Density Policy mandates that TLMSDF should evolve into a performance-driven spatial blueprint, and one that maps density priorities, aligns zones with infrastructure, embeds affordability, and actively contains rural and urban sprawl.

Integration Zones & Density Benchmarks

Municipal density policies are built on SPLUMA principles: promoting nodes, corridors, mixed-use development, and infrastructure efficiency

TLMSDF Review should:

- *Designate integration zones (i.e., Thohoyandou and Sibasa CBD, transport nodes, Shayandima Industrial Zone) with target densities as per the TLM Density Policy, 2022.*
- *Map these zones and embed benchmarks into SDF policy residential density, floor to area ratio, and mixed-use ratios.*

Transit-Oriented Density

Density policy prioritizes clustering growth around transport infrastructure for walkability and reduced sprawl.

TLMSDF Review should:

- *Spatially overlay high-frequency taxi ranks, Bus Rapid Transit if any, or arterials.*

Phased Density & Infrastructure Alignment

Density must align with service capacity and TLM capital budgeting and nodes must be sequenced per infrastructure readiness.

TLMSDF Review must:

- *Create phasing maps for short-term (infill in serviced nodes), medium-term (corridor density), long-term (strategic extensions).*
- *Link zone phasing to water, sanitation, roads, and energy rollout plans.*

Brownfield/Infill over Sprawl

Density seeks to utilize existing urban spaces before extending into peripheral areas or rural areas.

TLMSDF Review must:





- Map brownfield priority sites (underutilized land in identified nodes) and protect their adaptive use.
- Define strict urban edges where densification must occur before considering new development zones.

Spatial Justice & Affordable Housing

Densification is a tool for inclusion of mixed-income housing, affordability mandates, and equitable access.

TLMSDF Response:

- In densification zones, include inclusionary housing overlays with minimum affordable unit percentages.
- Locate these zones near amenities and public transport to ensure equitable access.

2.7.10 Thulamela Student Accommodation Policy, 2023

Thulamela Student Accommodation Policy, 2023 serves as a guide to ensure that student accommodation developers provide safe and affordable student accommodation wherein students can access social, economic and environmental needs.

The primary objectives of Thulamela Student Accommodation Policy are:

-  Regulatory Framework and Compliance (Accreditation)
-  Safety and Security

Transport and Accessibility

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF

-  TLMSDF with the aid of SPLUMA principles, aim to address spatial injustices and promote socio-economic integration. Thulamela Student Accommodation Policy, 2023 through formalization and improving housing options for students contributes to social inclusion and access to education.

-  TLMSDF highlights the need for coordinated infrastructure investment.

-  Thulamela Student Accommodation Policy, 2023 requirement for municipal inspections and compliance ensures that new student housing developments are supported by adequate services, reinforcing the SDF's objective of sustainable human settlements.

2.7.11 Thohoyandou Central Business District (CBD) Investment Plan, 2023

Thohoyandou Central Business District (CBD) Investment Plan is a strategic initiative by TLM, embedded within its IDP for 2023/24 – 2025/26. The plan aims to revitalize the CBD by addressing infrastructure deficits, urban decay, and economic stagnation, thereby transforming the CBD into a vibrant, safe, and economically active





urban centre. The 2023 Thohoyandou CBD Investment Plan demands a TLMSDF that is pathway-led, safety-conscious, regeneration-focused, and anchored in spatial precision for infrastructure, crime prevention, and public realm improvements. With these spatial prescriptions, the SDF will ensure coordinated, resilient, and liveable urban transformation.

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF

Road & Stormwater Infrastructure Enhancement

The investment focuses on rehabilitating key CBD streets including Shell and Old KFC Streets to improve accessibility for vehicles, pedestrians, emergency services, and stormwater control with solar-powered streetlights.

- *TLMSDF Review must spatially designate these priority streets as Infrastructure Upgrade Corridors, overlaying phasing and budgets for road and stormwater works, plus enhanced public lighting.*

Pedestrian Safety & Public Realm Improvements

The plan addresses conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles in the deteriorated CBD space.

- *TLMSDF Review must incorporate pedestrian friendly corridors and public realm zones complete with sidewalks,*

plazas/malls, and traffic calming strategies along revitalized streets.

Crime and Safety Nodes

With rising crime incidents (i.e., muggings, stabbings and substance abuse) near key commercial areas, taxi and bus ranks particularly between the Post Office and Venda Plaza safety is a concern.

- *TLMSDF Review must map identified crime hotspots/pressure points or segments and entrench spatial safety interventions with improved lighting, pedestrian density and proximity to policing.*

Emergency Access Optimization

Studies show that ambulance access in the CBD is inefficient, with narrow streets and poor connectivity creating delays.

- *TLMSDF Review should Identify emergency access priority zones, mandate street widening and clear vehicle access routes, buffer zones, and ambulance-friendly layouts within these precincts.*

Urban Regeneration & Maintenance

Research has indicated that the Thohoyandou CBD is experiencing urban decay due to poor planning, maintenance, infrastructure neglect, and low governance capacity.





- *TLMSDF Review must rezone urban regeneration precincts, adding overlays for maintenance driven public-private partnerships (PPPs). Including spatial governance tools like Precinct Plan Management Zones to ensure consistent upkeep and investment.*

Therefore, Thohoyandou CBD Investment Plan is a comprehensive approach to urban regeneration, aiming to create a sustainable, inclusive, and an economically vibrant CBD that serves the needs of its residents and stakeholders.

2.7.12 Summary of TLM Policy Framework

TLM policy framework, in the review of TLM SDF, guides spatial development by defining settlement typologies/hierarchies and SDAs/growth nodes, aligning land use with SPLUMA, LUMS, TLM SPLUM By-Laws, 2016, prioritizing economic infrastructure and transport networks, and designating areas for economic, industrial, and conservation purposes, while ensuring integrated planning and public participation which is inclusive of Traditional Authorities and the general public, business forums and so forth.

2.8 Vision Directives

The starting point for devising the municipal SDF vision should involve assessing district and local priorities, as well as the vision statements

of the national (NSDF, 2022), provincial (LSDF, 2025), district (VDM SDF, 2019-2024), and the TLM SDF, 2019-2023.

2.8.1 National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), 2022 Vision

The desired National Spatial Development Vision, Logic, and Pattern, as put forward in the NSDF, hold out the real promise of a very different South Africa by 2050.

The NSDF identifies *six National Spatial Development Levers* to realise the spatial development vision:

- ✚ Urban Areas and Regions;
- ✚ National Development Corridors;
- ✚ National Spatial Guided Social-Service Provisioning;
- ✚ Productive Rural Regions;
- ✚ National Ecological Infrastructure Network; and
- ✚ National Transport and Communication Infrastructure Network.

These levers form the basis of the *Main-Frame* and *five Sub-Frames* of the NSDF, in which more detailed spatial guidance is provided. The NSDF Sub-Frames provide a 'national spatial schema' as first put forward in the NDP, to inform, direct, prioritise and guide all





infrastructure investment and development spending decisions by Government and the private sector.

It aims to achieve this by providing strategic spatial development and investment guidance to *spatially direct* plans, budgets and actions of all public and private sector actors.

The five NSDF Sub-Frames speak to the six levers, and seek to put in place, or provide for

(1) interregional supranational connectivity, (2) a national system of nodes and corridors, (3) national resource economy regions, (4) a national movement and connectivity infrastructure system, and (5) a national ecological infrastructure network.

Finally, in a call for urgent action, a series of *National Spatial Action Areas* (NSAAs) are identified. These NSAAs represent the most urgent strategic spatial development catalysts to (1) bring about radical spatial transformation at scale, and (2) manage and mitigate rising national risks, and as such, require immediate national action. Concerted and sustained intergovernmental collaboration is required in these NSAAs over the short term to (1) target context-specific, focused and catalytic national spatial development interventions, and (2) kickstart the process of aligning plans, budgets and departmental

plans *in* and *between* spheres of government around national spatial development and transformation and economic transition priorities.

The *five* NSAAs are:

- ✚ National Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition Regions;
- ✚ The Central Innovation Belt;
- ✚ National Resource Risk Areas;
- ✚ National Urban Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition Regions; and
- ✚ The Arid-Innovation Region.

While providing overarching (1) national spatial development direction, (2) catalytic impetus, and (3) spatial development and investment guidance in moving the country towards the Ideal National Spatial Development Pattern, the realisation of this desired South Africa will require of the NSDF to be:

- ✚ Championed;
- ✚ Communicated;
- ✚ Institutionalised;





✚ Embedded; and

✚ Actioned.

These five tasks demand significant and decisive change in the ways that investment and spending have been (1) planned, (2) budgeted for, (3) funded, and (4) undertaken in national space. While these changes will not always be easy, and entail very different ways of engaging, collaborating and acting, the rewards of doing so will far outweigh the sacrifices – *a peaceful, prosperous and truly transformed South Africa by 2050!*

2.8.2 Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2025 Vision

✚ Spatial Vision

The spatial vision guides the long-term development pattern of Limpopo and represents a development ideal that is strived for:

The LSDF envisions a provincial spatial structure where the natural environment and valuable agricultural land are protected for future generations, with a strong, diverse and growing economy, and that offers its residents high quality living environments and good job opportunities.

✚ Provincial Spatial Outcomes

The provincial spatial outcomes are the tangible achievements that are strived for, to realise the spatial vision for Limpopo:

✚ Provincial Spatial Outcome One

A network of consolidated, transformed and well-connected urban nodes, regional development anchors and rural service centres that enable Limpopo to derive maximum transformative benefit from urbanisation and concentrated rural settlements, enabling climate change adaptation, inclusive economic development and equal, effective and efficient access to social services in support of equitable and inclusive provincial human capital development.

✚ Provincial Spatial Outcome Two

Provincial-scale corridors and productive rural regions enable sustainable livelihoods supported by economic diversification through green industrialisation and participation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, mutually beneficial urban-rural linkages, and wise management, nurturing and conservation of ecological assets and ecosystem services.

✚ Provincial Spatial Outcome Three

Provincial connectivity and movement infrastructure systems are strategically located, extended and maintained, to support a diverse,





ecologically sustainable, adaptive, regenerative and inclusive economy, and a set of key provincial, national and regional gateway cities and towns.

Provincial Spatial Outcome Four

Productive regions are supported by sustainable resource economies and strong and resilient regional development anchors provide effective, efficient and equitable access to people living in rural areas to the provincial, national and global economy.

Provincial Spatial Outcome Five

The provincial ecological infrastructure and natural resource foundation are well-protected and managed, to enable climate change mitigation and sustainable and equitable access to water, high-potential agricultural land, minerals and other natural resources, both for current and future generations.

The following Spatial Vision is proposed for Vhembe District Municipality (VDM),

“A spatially integrated district striving towards effective sustainable development, service delivery and improving accessibility to economic resources by:

-  *Creating an integrated and spatially just society through the equitable and sustainable spatial restructuring of Vhembe’s urban and rural settlements.*
-  *Spatial restructuring through the development of a new SMART city with supporting smaller nodes that are integrated with well-defined corridors.*
-  *Optimizing the rich and balanced mix of Vhembe’s natural assets in agriculture, tourism, heritage, natural and mineral resources, and eco system services within their scenic settings (These are contained in the sacred sites and important bio-diverse landscapes of the Soutpansberg, Mapungubwe and Kruger National Parks and the fertile Luvuvhu river valley).*
-  *Economic potential arising from its relatively dense populations along the R523, R524 and R578 corridors and its strategic position straddling the international N1 Great North Road transport corridor linking Gauteng to the SADC countries by road and rail; and,*
-  *Ensuring targeted investment and maintenance of key infrastructure networks including transport, water resources and energy in order to achieve sustained economic growth and improved service delivery in the district.”*





The implications of this vision are as follows:

- ✚ Spatial planning must ensure that the district's resources that are assets for one sector are not damaged for their use by another, for example, open cast mining should be carefully rehabilitated so that the land can be used for conservation, agriculture or tourism afterwards;
- ✚ Water demand must be carefully managed so that urban, agricultural and mining needs can all be met;
- ✚ Infrastructure needs for one sector should be designed and managed so that they can benefit other sectors; and,
- ✚ The road infrastructure (i.e. tourism corridors) providing access to the many sacred sites and national parks, such as Kruger and Mapungubwe, must be properly maintained.
- ✚ Special economic zones (SEZ) must be well managed to boost the local economic objectives through job creation and external investment attraction.
- ✚ Spatial planning must also ensure that the local cultural assets are conserved and well branded to meet the economic, physical and social objectives of the district.
- ✚ To create liveable, self-sustaining rural communities.

TLM SDF under Review Vision Directives According to the reviewed TLM IDP 2022/2023 – 2026/2027, the following vision was adopted for TLM:

“We, the people of Thulamela would like our Municipality to achieve a city status by year 2030, to promote urban regeneration and comprehensive rural development whilst encouraging Local Economic Development to improve the quality of lives of our People”.

The vision statement of the TLM articulates a collective aspiration to transform the municipality into a city by 2030. This ambition is rooted in a commitment to urban regeneration, comprehensive rural development, and the promotion of Local Economic Development (LED), all aimed at enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

Interpretation of the Vision:

✚ Achieving City Status by 2030:

This goal reflects a desire for the municipality to evolve into a more urbanized and economically vibrant area. City status often brings increased autonomy, access to greater resources, and the ability to implement more extensive development projects.

✚ Urban Regeneration:

The focus here is on revitalizing urban areas within the municipality. This includes improving infrastructure, enhancing public spaces, and fostering economic activities that can rejuvenate the urban environment.





Comprehensive Rural Development:

Recognizing the municipality's rural components, this aspect emphasizes the need to uplift rural communities through improved services, infrastructure, and economic opportunities, ensuring balanced development across the municipality.

Promoting Local Economic Development:

LED involves strategies that stimulate economic activity at the local level, such as supporting small businesses, attracting investment, and creating employment opportunities. This approach is vital for sustainable economic growth and improving residents' livelihoods.

Improving Quality of Life:

The ultimate aim of the vision is to enhance the well-being of all residents. This encompasses access to quality services, economic opportunities, and a safe and healthy environment.

Alignment with Strategic Plans

This vision is consistent with the municipality's (IDP) for 2022/23–2026/27, which outlines strategic objectives and initiatives to realize these goals. The IDP serves as a roadmap, detailing the necessary steps and resources required to achieve the envisioned transformation. TLMs vision is a comprehensive blueprint for transformation, aiming to balance urban and rural development while fostering economic growth and improving residents' quality of life.

It reflects a proactive approach to governance, emphasizing inclusivity, sustainability, and community empowerment. The summary principles relevant to the formulation of the TLM SDF under review gives clear spatial direction for development within the municipality. These principles are included below:

-  Provide basic services infrastructure for the whole municipality.
-  Sustainable residential development should be advanced.
-  Ensure safe and healthy communities.
-  Support the development of agricultural activities.
-  Protect ecosystems and natural resources.
-  Focus on Infrastructure Development in key areas to promote economic development.
-  Optimise manufacturing opportunities within the municipality.
-  Optimise tourism opportunities within the municipality.
-  Provision of quality public spaces in settlements.
-  Promote tourism within the municipality by developing better access to tourism areas.
-  Provide fair access to social infrastructure and amenities.
-  Provision of quality public spaces in settlements.
-  Limit urban sprawl through compact development, infill and densification.





- ✚ Provide accessibility and permeability to corridors of development to all through efficient transport infrastructure upgrading and maintenance.

In formulating a spatial development vision that accurately reflects the nature and characteristics of TLM, it is crucial to consider the analysis of existing planning and policy documents relevant to the municipal area. The starting point for devising the municipal SDF vision should involve assessing district and local priorities, as well as the vision statements of the national (NSDF, 2022), provincial (LSDF, 2025), district (VDM SDF, 2019-2024), and the TLM SDF, 2019-2023. Some of the formulated visions impacting TLM SDF under Review are indicated below:





Figure 4: SDF & IDP Vision



The background image shows a paved road winding through a lush green landscape. A yellow and black bus is driving away on the road. In the foreground, a large, vibrant green leaf is positioned horizontally, framing the text. The sky is filled with dramatic, grey clouds. The entire image is decorated with blue geometric shapes, including triangles and chevrons, in the corners and along the edges.

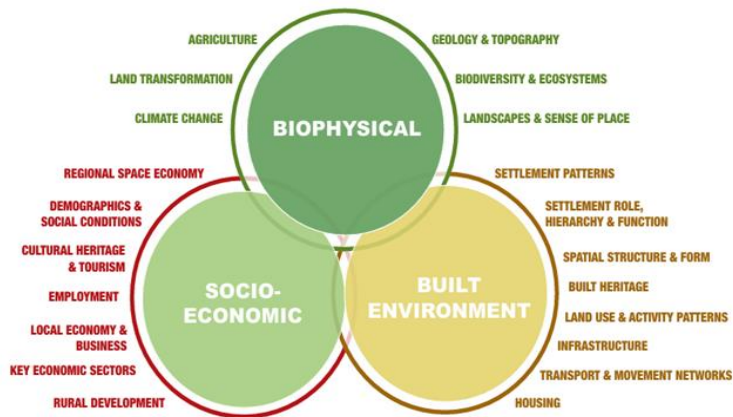
3. SPATIAL & SECTORAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION



3. SPATIAL & SECTORAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION.

The objective of the status quo analysis within the TLM is to evaluate the current institutional structure, condition and quality of resources to establish a clear baseline for future spatial development planning. Moreover, this assessment supports informed decision-making by identifying both constraints and opportunities to growth such as economic infrastructure backlogs, environmental degradation, etc) and opportunities (underutilised land, socio-economic potential, etc.). To ensure a holistic understanding of TLM, resources are grouped into three key categories namely Biophysical Environment, Socio-Economic Environment and Built Environment.

Figure 5: DALRRD, SDF Guidelines, 2017



3.1 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

The following is a summary of the spatial analysis of the TLM in terms of its institutional structure, socio-economic, bio-physical and built environment. The Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2025 also identifies TLM as part of the Eastern Region which is therefore described as “dense rural settlement areas surrounded by high intensity agriculture and tourism”.

The institutional structure of the TLM can be explained in terms of municipal wards, traditional authorities, proclaimed towns and villages as well as land claims, restitution and redistribution, together with the priority issues per ward as briefly discussed below.

3.1.1 Municipal Ward Boundaries

The TLM has a total 41 Wards made out of several urban and rural settlements or villages, wherein, most of these wards fall under the Spatial and Transformation Economic Transition areas, and this is according to the LSDF, 2025. (Refer to map 1)

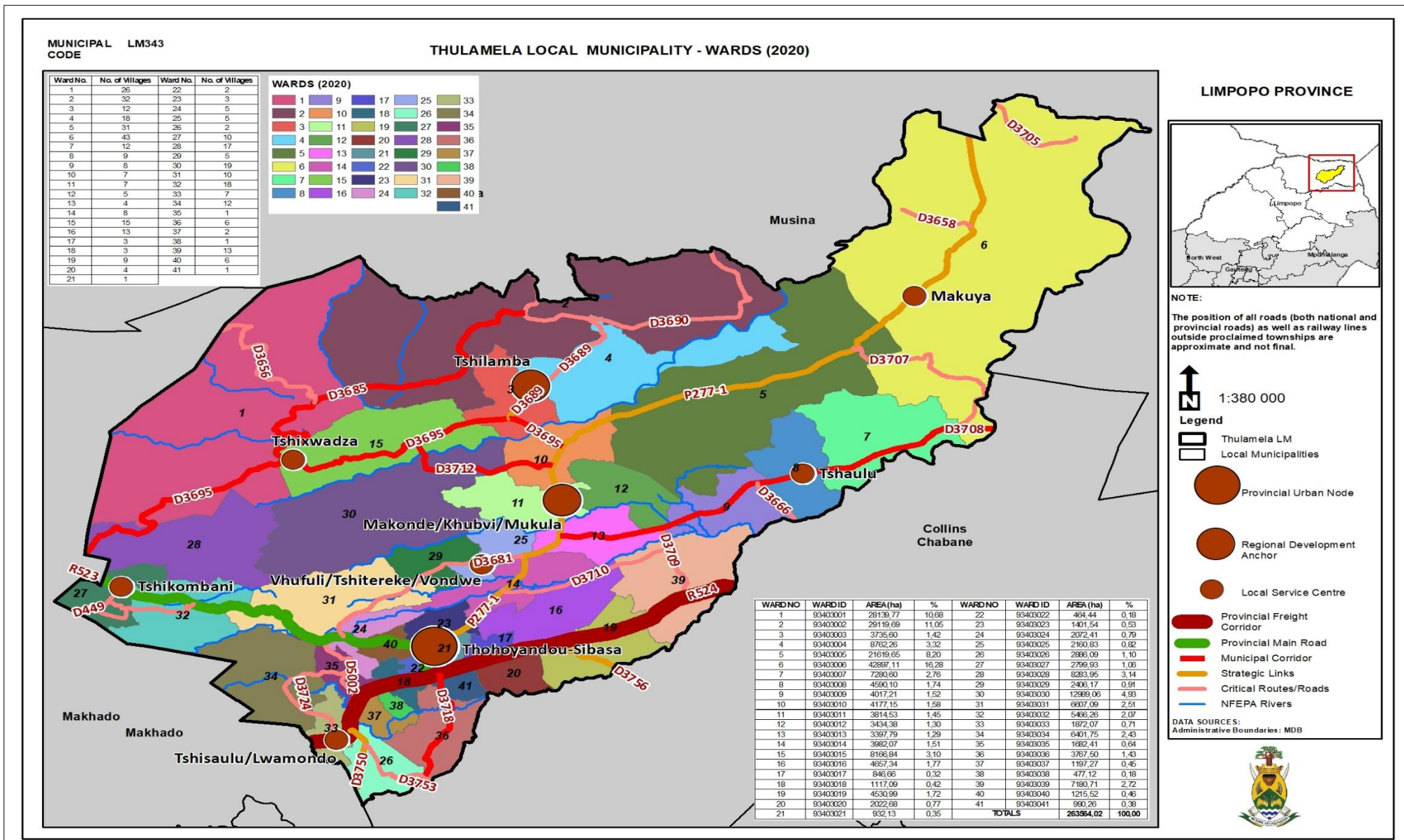
3.1.2 Traditional Authorities/Councils Boundaries and Offices Location

TLM is predominantly rural in character, with large portions of land falling under Traditional Authorities/Councils, and these are divided into eight (8) Traditional Councils areas as depicted in map 2 and 3: Makuya Traditional Council, Tshikundamalema Traditional Council, Mphaphuli Traditional Council, Thengwe Traditional Council, Rambuda Traditional Council, Khakhu Traditional Council, Tshivhase Traditional Council, and Lwamondo Traditional Council. The location of Traditional Councils offices is also provided for.



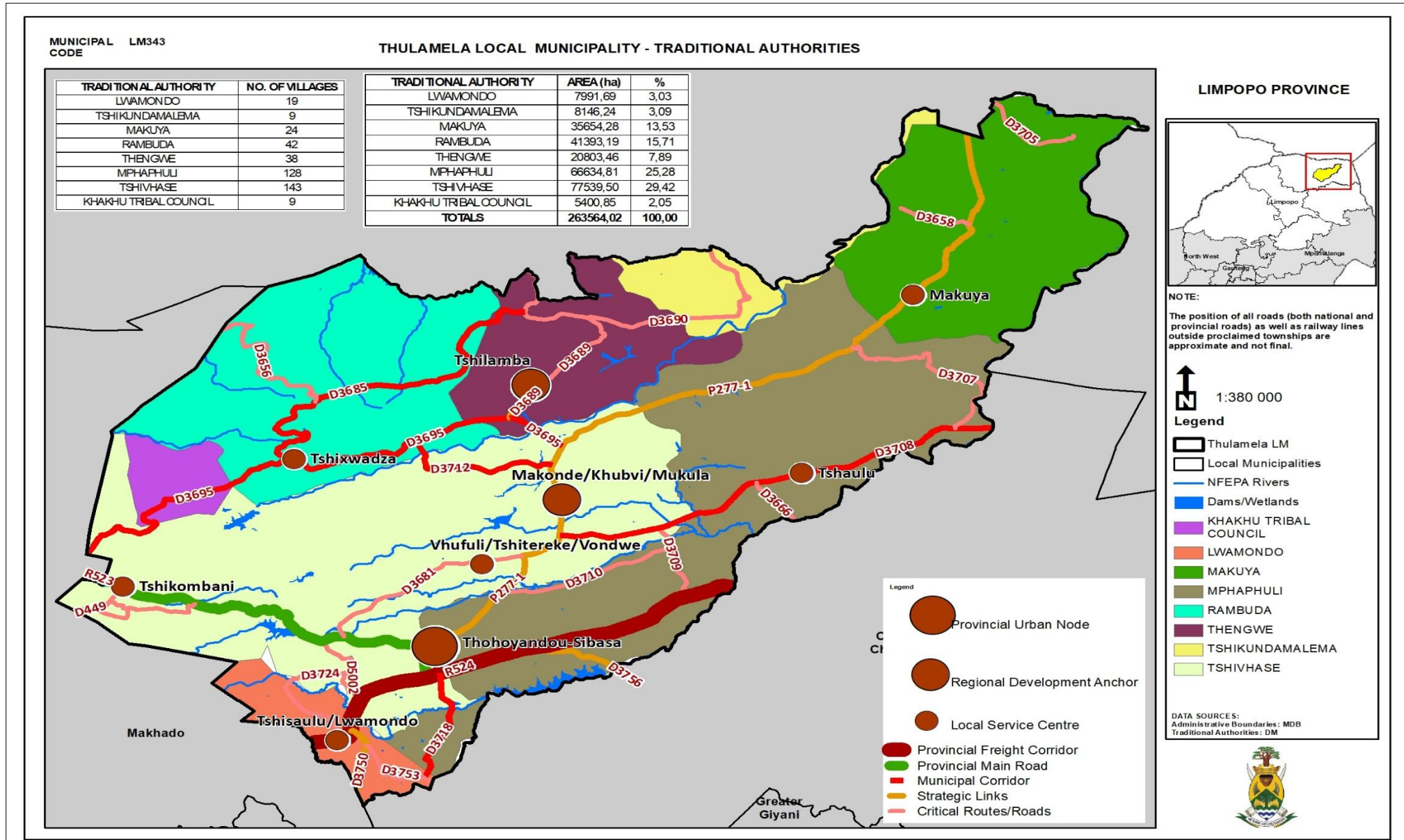


Map 4: Wards



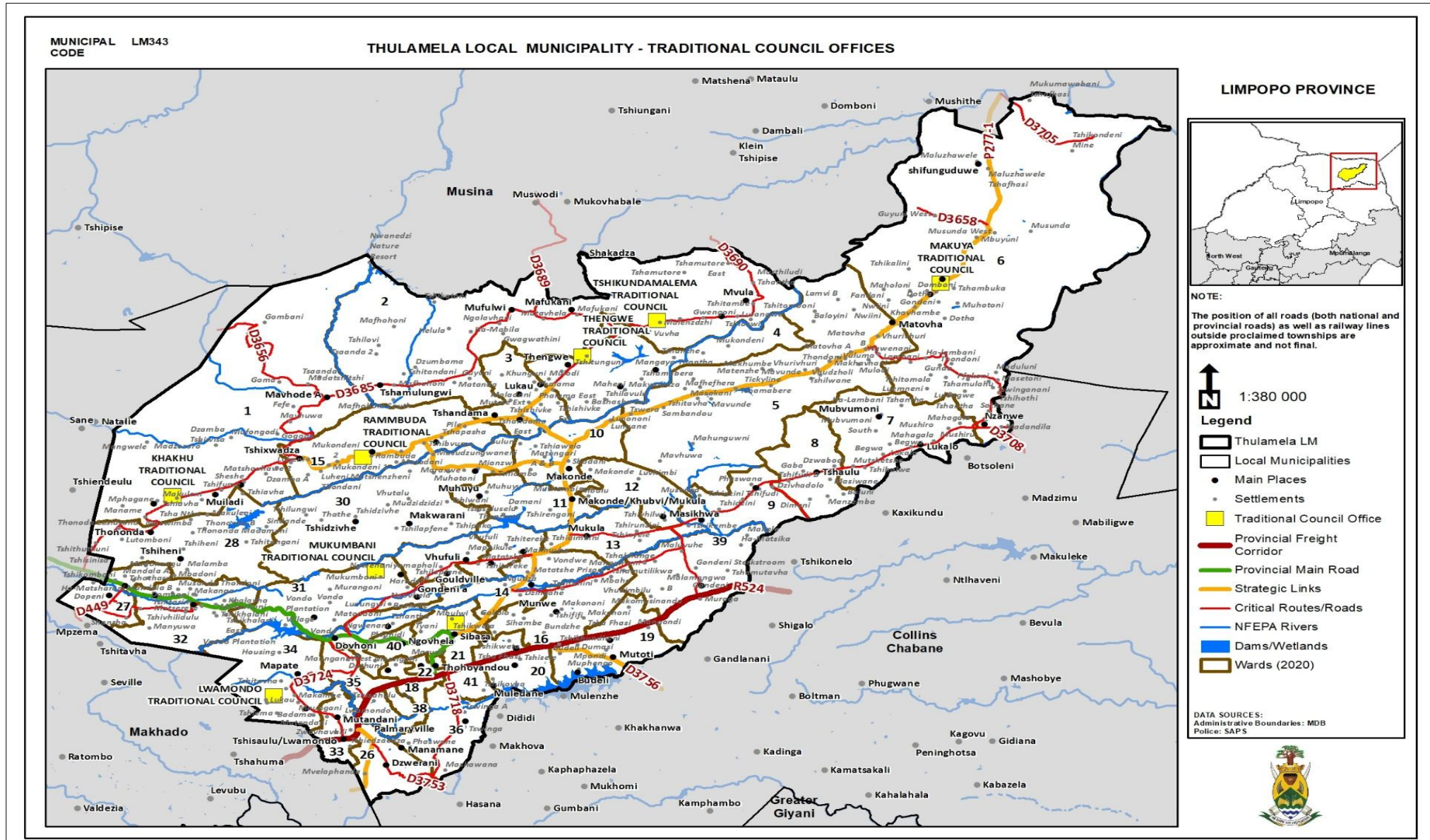


Map 5: Traditional Authorities





Map 6: Traditional Council Offices





3.1.3 Proclaimed Areas

TLM has two formally Proclaimed Towns including Thohoyandou which is an Administrative and Services Gateway according to the LSDF, 2025 and Tshilamba which is also part of the Environment and Tourism Focus Area according to the LSDF, 2025 and they are within the Eastern Region (Refer to figure 6 & 7).

Throughout TLM there are other small rural towns and villages with approved General Plans (i.e., Tshitereke and Tshifulanani). Furthermore, there are a number of un-proclaimed rural towns and villages mostly aligned along the major routes (i.e., R523, R524, P277/1 and other routes) within the land under Traditional Authority

Alignment of TLM SDF under Review Vision and Limpopo SDF, 2025

The vision of TLM is to achieve city status by 2030, promoting urban regeneration and comprehensive rural development while encouraging Local Economic Development to improve quality of life.

Urban Regeneration

The LSDF emphasizes the development of integrated and functional spatial structures that support sustainable human settlements and urbanization. TLM focus on urban regeneration through achieving city status aligns with the LSDF's goal of strengthening urban nodes like Thohoyandou to become engines of economic growth and service delivery within Limpopo.

Comprehensive Rural Development

Both the municipal vision and the LSDF prioritize balanced development that includes rural areas. The LSDF promotes spatial transformation that supports rural development, aiming to reduce disparities between urban and rural communities by improving infrastructure, services, and economic opportunities, directly supporting TLM's comprehensive rural development goal.

Local Economic Development

LSDF promotes focusing investments in infrastructure and managing land use effectively to boost economic activity. TLM's vision to encourage local economic development aligns with this approach by emphasizing planned land use, investments in infrastructure, and the creation of economic opportunities that include all community members. Both the LSDF and TLM emphasize careful planning and infrastructure development as key drivers for sustainable economic growth and improved livelihoods for residents.

National Spatial Development Framework

According to the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), Thohoyandou is designated as a Regional Anchor. This means it is considered a key town that must support wider regional rural development. The NSDF recognizes Thohoyandou's role in providing services and livelihood opportunities to rural populations, contributing to an integrated and inclusive spatial development pattern with a focus on rural restructuring and development.





Thohoyandou's development and spatial planning are aligned with the NSDF's focus on creating efficient, well-connected urban centres that contribute to regional economic growth, social upliftment, and environmental sustainability. The NSDF supports leveraging Thohoyandou's role as a service and administrative hub by guiding investments that improve transport networks, housing, and socio-economic infrastructure in line with national priorities. This connection ensures that Thohoyandou participates in the broader national vision of equitable spatial transformation and sustainable development across South Africa.

Limpopo Spatial Development Framework

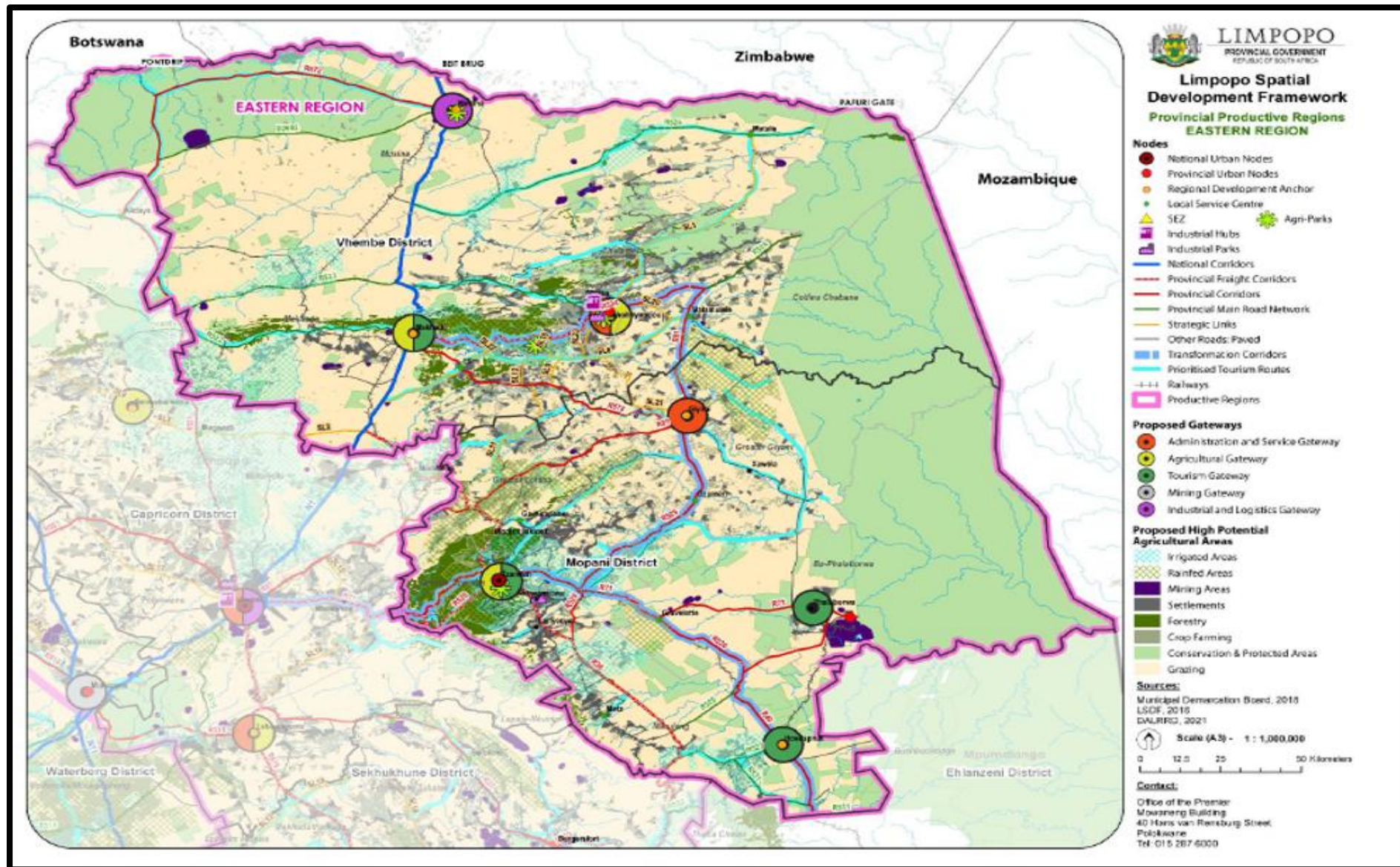
Thohoyandou – Sibasa, as a key urban centre in Limpopo and part of the VDM, aligns with the LSDF through this framework's role in directing spatial planning and development within the province. The LSDF provides a strategic spatial context that incorporates Thohoyandou's local development priorities, infrastructure planning, and land use management into the broader provincial development agenda. This linkage promotes integrated growth by coordinating Thohoyandou's urban expansion and service delivery with provincial strategies aimed at economic development, spatial transformation, and environmental sustainability (Refer to Figure 6 & 7)

Based on provincial macro spatial planning initiatives, ten nodal points have been identified within the TLM are Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshilamba, Makonde, Lwamondo, Tshikombani, Vhufuli/ Tshitereke, Makuya and Tshizwadza.





Figure 7: LSDF, 2025 Eastern Region



Source: Limpopo Spatial Development Framework, 2025





3.1.4 Spatial Interpretation of the TLM IDP Priority Issues

TLM IDP Review 2025/26 – 2026/27 priority issues are summarized per each of the 41 wards and illustrated in Table 3 – 5. The information shown in Table 1 can be summarized as follows:

As illustrated in Table 3 the majority of the IDP projects are located in wards in the north-western and south-western part of the municipal area.

- ✚ Housing needs dominates the IDP priority issues in the municipal area.
- ✚ 29 out of the 41 wards have identified electrification as a priority need and this also include Provision of High Mast in the settlements.
- ✚ Upgrading of road infrastructure that includes streets and bridges is also a dominant need prevalent to 20 out of the 41 wards.
- ✚ Water supply is also a dominant need affecting 6 out of the 41 wards. This need is more prevalent in densely populated wards of the municipal area.
- ✚ Provision of sports and recreational facilities needs are prominent in 8 out of the 41 wards.
- ✚ Provision of education facilities is a dominant need in 1 out of the 41 wards.
- ✚ Provision of health facilities is a prominent need within the municipality.
- ✚ Local economic development is a priority of all of the 41 wards, pending LED Projects from the TLM.





Table 3: Priority IDP Projects

PROJECT NAME	WARD	LOCATION	BUDGETING PLANNING			FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTATION DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27		
1. N1 to Willyspoort to Thohoyandou P27811 2. Design Development (stage3)		Thohoyandou	R8 417 000	R5 000 000	R5 000 000	RAL	RAL
3. Tshifulanani -Duthuni RAL/ T1154: Design Development stage 3	33/35	Tshifulanani-Duthuni	R5 000 000	R5 000 000	R5 000 000	RAL	RAL
4. Mukula – Mhinga RAL / T1157: Design Development stage 3	13	Mukula	R5 000 000	R5 000 000	R5 000 000	RAL	RAL
5. Tshivhilwi – Muraga RAL 6. /T1157:Design Development stage 3	12	Tshivhilwi- Muraga	R5 000 000	R6 000 000	R6 000 000	RAL	RAL
7. N1 to Dopeni : Design Development stage 3	32	Dopeni	R5 000 000	R5 000 000	R5 000 000	RAL	RAL
8. Maintenance of bridge PN 180 9. on Road D 3753-010 Dzondo	9	Tshidzini	R3 000 000	R2 474 000	R2 500 000	RAL	RAL
10. Upgrading of internal streets and lighting in Shayandima Industrial Area	38	Shayandima	R5 000 000	R15 000 000	R2 500 000	Own Funding	Technical Services
11. UIF to Shell Garage Access Street	22	Thohoyandou CBD	R12 000 000	R10 000 000	R12 000 000	Neighbourhood Grant	Technical Services
12. Paradise to KFC Access Streets	22	Thohoyandou CBD	R17 000 000	R10 000 000	R12 000 000	Own Funding/Neighbourhood Grant	Technical Services
13. Lwamondo Territorial 14. Authorities Road Access	33	Lwamondo	R2 000 000	R18 000 000	R3 000 000	MIG/Own Funding	Technical Services
15. Thohoyandou K &K Portion Maniini Streets	18	Maniini	R2 000 000	R33 000 000	R37 000 000	Own funding	Technical Services





PROJECT NAME	WARD	LOCATION	BUDGETING PLANNING			FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTATION DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27		
16. Mapate Access Road	32	Mapate	R24 000 000			MIG	Technical Services
17. Hamakhuvha Ring Road to upgrade to tar	25	Ha-Makhuvha	R32 000 000	R29 000 000		MIG	Technical Services
18. Makumbane to Thavhani Road	29	Makumbane/Tshisaulu		R20 000 000	R30 000 000	MIG	Technical Services
19. Tshiulungoma Ring Road	20	Tshilungoma		R20 000 000	R20 000 000	MIG	Technical services
20. Thohoyandou M (Maniini) streets Phase 1	41	Maniini	R22 000 000			MIG/Own Funding	Technical services
21. Thohoyandou J (Muledane) street phase 2	18	Thohoyandou J	R 2 000 000	R 24 000 000		MIG/Own Funding	Technical services
22. Shayandima Ext 3 Streets	38	Shayandima			R40 000 000	MIG/Own Funding	Technical Services
23. Shayandima A and Ext 3 Streets	38	Shayandima			R10 000 000	MIG/Own Funding	Technical Services
24. Matavhela Internal streets upgrade	02	Matavhela	R20 000 000			MIG/Own Funding	Technical Services
25. Pile streets Upgrade	15	Pile			R20 000 000	Own Funding	Technical Services
26. Rehabilitation of surface Roads and storm water within R293 towns (Thohoyandou, Shayandima, Makwarela Tshilamba)		R293 Towns	R 12 954 000	R10 000 000	R10 000 000	Own Funding	Technical Services
27. Upgrades of internal streets from gravel to paving (low traffic volume) and Asphalt coupled with stormwater within R293 towns (Thohoyandou Q, Mbaleni, Magidi, Shayandima, Makwarela, Tshilamba, Maniini, Muledane)		R293 towns	R30 000 000	R30 000 000	R30 000 000	MIG/Own Funding	Technical Services
28. Thohoyandou K,L,M High mast(3)		Thohoyandou K,L,M		R700 000			Technical Services
29. Thohoyandou J High mast (1)	41	Thohoyandou J	R700 000				Technical Services
30. Dzimauli High Mast					R700 000		





PROJECT NAME	WARD	LOCATION	BUDGETING PLANNING			FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTATION DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27		
31. Thohoyandou M (Maniini) Streets phase 1	40	Maniini	R20 000 000			Own Funding	Technical Services
32. Thohoyandou E street lights	17	Thohoyandou E		R5 000 000		Own Funding	Technical Services
33. Thohoyandou M street Lights	40	Thohoyandou M		R5 000 000		Own Funding	Technical Services
34. Tshixwadza High Mast(1)	01	Tshixwadza		R700 000		Own Funding	
35. Khakhu High Mast (1)	04	Mapula (Khakhu)			R700 000	Own Funding	Technical Services
36. Matavhela High Mast(1)	02	Matavhela			R700 000	Own Funding	Technical Services
37. Makwarela Ext 3 High Mast	17	Makwarela EXT 3			R2 100 000	Own Funding	Technical Services
38. Fefe Electrification of 50 units	02	Fefe		R900 000		INEP	Technical Service
39. Mbilwi Makanga Electrification of 150 Units	23	Mbilwi (Makanga)		R2 700 000		INEP	Technical Services
40. Dopeni 120 Electrification of 120 Units	32	Dopeni		R2 160 000		INEP	Technical Sevices
41. Mukumbani Electrification of 100 units	35	Mukumbani		R1 800 000		INEP	Technical Services
42. Tshinapfene Electrification of 60 units	29	Tshinapfene		R1 080 000		INEP	Technical Services
43. Haradali Electrification of 60 Units	31	Haradali		R1 080 000		INEP	Technical Services
44. Tshidzivhe Electrification of 50 units	30	Tshidzivhe		R900 000		INEP	Technical Services
45. Makwarani Electrification of units 50	29	Makwarani		R900 000		INEP	Technical Services
46. Makwarani Electrification of units 50	29	Makwarani		R900 000		INEP	Technical Services
47. Mudzidzi Electrification of 50 units	30	Mudzidzi		R900 000		INEP	Technical Services





PROJECT NAME	WARD	LOCATION	BUDGETING PLANNING			FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTATION DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27		
48. Tshipako Electrification of 100 units	29	Tshipako		R1 800 000		INEP	Technical Services
49. Tshidzini Electrification of 100 units	09	Tshidzini		R 1 800 000		INEP	Technical Services
50. Mvelaphanda Electrification of 800 units	26	Mvelaphanda		R14 400 000		INEP	Technical Services
51. Ha-Muraga Electrification of 80 units	39	Ha-Muraga		R1 440 000		INEP	Technical Services
52. Dzwerani Electrification of 200 units	26	Dzwerani		R3 600 000		INEP	Technical Services
53. Tshithuthuni Thengwe of Electrification of 100 Units	4	Tshithuthuni (Thengwe)		R1 800 000		INEP	Technical Services
54. Ha-Makuya Electrification of 300 Units	06	Makuya		R5 400 000		INEP	Technical Services
55. Dumasi Electrification of 100 units	19	Dumasi		R1 800 000		INEP	Technical Services
56. Budeli Electrification of 150 units	19	Budeli			R2 700 000	INEP	Technical Services
57. Mukula Electrification of 150 units	13	Mukula			R1 800 000	INEP	Technical Services
58. Mavhola Electrification of 50 units		Mavhola			R900 000	INEP	Technical Services
59. Matangari/ Tshiombo Electrification of 200 units	10	Matangari/ Tshiombo			R3 600 000	INEP	Technical Services
60. Tshitavha Electrification of 80 units	5	Tshitavha			R3 600 000	INEP	Technical Services
61. Tshitavha Electrification of 80 units	5	Tshitavha			R3 600 000	INEP	Technical Services
62. Duthuni Electrification of 100 units	35	Duthuni			R1 800 000	INEP	Technical Services
63. Lwamonodo Electrification of 300 units	33	Lwamondo			R5 400 000	INEP	Technical Services





PROJECT NAME	WARD	LOCATION	BUDGETING PLANNING			FUNDING SOURCE	IMPLEMENTATION DEPARTMENT/ AGENCY
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27		
64. Tswinga Electrification of 400 units	26	Tswinga			R7 200 000	INEP	Technical Services
65. Thengwe Electrification of 100 Units	4	Thengwe			R1 800 000	INEP	Technical Services
66. Mphego Phase 2 Electrification of 100 units	20	Mphego		R8 718 000		INEP	Technical Services
67. Mangodi ha (Sidou) New Area	19	Mangodi ha (Sidou)	R2 000 000				
68. Tshirenzhani Electrification of 100 units	27	Tshirenzhani			R1 800 000	INEP	Technical Services
69. Tshifudi Electrification of 200 units	9	Tshifudi	R4 000 000			INEP	Technical Services
70. Jim Kone Electrification of 100 units	19	Jim Kone	R2 000 000			INEP	Technical Services

Table 4: TLM Updated Housing Sector Plan 2025 projects.

No	Ward No.	Village/ Township	Number of Units	Urban/Rural	Remarks
1	38	Shayandima (Zone 1-12)	150	Urban/Rural	Available of Services
2	37	Itsani (Tshivhuyuni, Matieni, Magalangwe, Thivhulawi, Tshitavhani, Shovholwe, Siawoadza)	200	Rural Rural Rural Rural	
3	26	Tshifulanani Tshishushuru Dzwerani Mvelaphanda	130 110 90 120	Rural Rural Rural Rural	
4	20	Tshikhudini Mavhunda	70 50	Rural Rural	Sewer needed





No	Ward No.	Village/ Township	Number of Units	Urban/Rural	Remarks
		Makwarela Ext3	10	Urban	
		Mphego	70	Rural	
		Tshilungoma	60	Rural	
		Lufule 2	60	Rural	
		Thukhutha	50	Rural	
5	19	Mutoti Tshilivho Tshikhudini Dumasi Budeli	50	Rural	
		Makhuvha Mangondi Sidou	120	Rural	
		Jim kone	70	Rural	
		Tshamutilikwa Mukomaasinandu	60	Rural	
			80	Rural	
			50	Rural	
			70	Rural	
			60	Rural	
			50	Rural	
			60	Rural	
			60	Rural	
6	29	Vhufuli	60	Rural	
7	6	Makuya	250	Rural	
		Tshikondeni	80	Rural	
		Gunda	120	Rural	
		Ha-Lambani	150	Rural	
		Ha-Mukomawabani	100	Rural	
		Tshikondeni	50	Rural	
8	32	Mandala	50	Rural (Out Standing)	





Table 5: Summary of TLM IDP Priority Projects/Issues per Wards

Ward	Water	Electricity, Street lights, High Mast	Roads, Streets and Bridges	Sanitation	Cemeteries	Housing	Educational Facilities, Office Block	Local Economic Development	Agriculture	Sport Facility	Health Facility	Telecommu- nications	Transport	Planning and Development	Environment
1		x				x									
2		x				x									
3			x	x		x				x					
4		x				x				x					
5						x									
6		x				x									
7															
8						x							x		
9		x				x				x					
10						x									
11		x													
12		x	x			x				x					
13		x	x			x									
14			x			x									





Ward	Water	Electricity, Street lights, High Mast	Roads, Streets and Bridges	Sanitation	Cemeteries	Housing	Educational Facilities, Office Block	Local Economic Development	Agriculture	Sport Facility	Health Facility	Telecommu- cations	Transport	Planning and Development	Environment
15		x	x			x									
16		x				x									
17		x				x				x					
18			x	x		x									x
19		x				x									
20		x	x			x									
21		x	x			x				x					
22						x									
23		x					x								
24	x	x	x			x									
25	x		x			x									
26		x				x									
27		x				x									
28	x	x	x			x									
29		x	x			x									





Ward	Water	Electricity, Street lights, High Mast	Roads, Streets and Bridges	Sanitation	Cemeteries	Housing	Educational Facilities, Office Block	Local Economic Development	Agriculture	Sport Facility	Health Facility	Telecommu- nications	Transport	Planning and Development	Environment
30	x					x									
31	x	x				x				x					
32		x	x			x							x		
33			x			x									
34		x				x									
35		x	x			x									
36	x	x				x									
37			x	x	x	x									
38			x		x	x									
39		x				x				x					
40		x	x												
41		x	x			x									
TLM		x	x	x		x		x							







3.2 BIOPHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The biophysical environment within TLM encompasses the natural resources and ecosystems that are integral for sustainability and development. Analyzing these resources provides insights into their current state, utilization trends, and potential areas for intervention/pressure points.

Such assessments are crucial for enhancing the effective and sustainable management of TLM natural assets. By understanding and monitoring these environmental components, it can implement strategies that promote resilience, support livelihoods, and ensure the long-term well-being of its communities.

3.2.1 Biodiversity

In accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDGs 11, 13, and 15), the National Development Plan (NDP), the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022), the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025), and the principles of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), biodiversity shall be recognised as a critical spatial planning informant within the Thulamela Local Municipality. Biodiversity, encompassing genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity, underpins ecological integrity, climate resilience, ecosystem services, and sustainable livelihoods within the municipal area.

The Thulamela Spatial Development Framework shall promote the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of biodiversity by directing development away from ecologically sensitive and high-value biodiversity areas, safeguarding critical biodiversity areas and ecological support areas, maintaining ecological corridors, and ensuring that land-use decisions are

informed by environmental sensitivity and climate change considerations. This SDF must seek to create balance development imperatives with environmental sustainability, support inclusive socio-economic growth, and ensure the long-term resilience and well-being of communities within Thulamela Local Municipality. The section will deal with the analyses of the vegetation, CBSs, ESAs, Pas,

3.2.1.1 Vegetation

The conservation, management, and sustainable use of vegetation within Thulamela Local Municipality must be guided by a comprehensive national, provincial, and local policy and legislative framework. Key among these is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Section 24), which guarantees the right to an environment that is not harmful to health or well-being and mandates the protection of the environment for present and future generations.

The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004), specifically provides for the conservation of South Africa's biodiversity, the protection of ecosystems and indigenous vegetation, and the management of threatened or protected ecosystems and species. In addition, the National Forests Act, 1998 (Act No. 84 of 1998), affords protection to indigenous forests and protected tree species occurring within the municipal area.

SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land), emphasise the protection and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems and the sustainable management of natural resources.





These objectives are reinforced by the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which recognises biodiversity and healthy ecosystems as critical enablers of economic development, climate resilience, and rural livelihoods, particularly in environmentally sensitive and biodiversity-rich regions such as Vhembe District.

The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) further identifies biodiversity assets, ecological corridors, and environmentally sensitive landscapes as key spatial informants that must guide development decisions and infrastructure investment. In alignment with this, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and the Thulamela Local Municipality Spatial Development Framework prioritise the protection of critical biodiversity areas, biosphere reserves, mountain ecosystems, and indigenous vegetation as part of a sustainable and resilient spatial structure.

The role of natural and vegetation resources in supporting local economic development, food security, cultural heritage, and eco-tourism opportunities, particularly within and adjacent to the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. Collectively, these legislative and policy instruments require that vegetation conservation be integrated into spatial planning, land-use management, and development control processes within Thulamela Local Municipality, ensuring that development occurs in a manner that safeguards ecological integrity while supporting sustainable socio-economic growth.

At provincial level, the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025) recognises biodiversity, indigenous vegetation, and ecological systems as strategic assets

for inclusive economic growth, rural development, climate adaptation, and environmental sustainability. The Plan emphasises the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, conservation-led development, and the promotion of eco-tourism, agriculture, and biodiversity-based livelihoods, particularly within biodiversity-rich areas such as the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. In this context, vegetation resources within Thulamela Local Municipality play a critical role in supporting food security, traditional medicine, cultural heritage, and nature-based economic opportunities. The review of the Thulamela Spatial Development Framework should therefore aligns with the LDP (2025) by integrating vegetation conservation into spatial planning, land-use management, and development prioritisation, ensuring that development initiatives support provincial growth objectives while safeguarding ecological integrity and long-term environmental resilience.

Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) is characterised by a rich and diverse vegetation profile, which forms an integral part of its ecological and cultural heritage. The municipality predominantly falls within the Greater Savanna Biome, encompassing various vegetation types such as the Soutpansberg Mountain Bushveld, Limpopo Ridge Bushveld, and Granite Lowveld. The Soutpansberg Mountain Bushveld, particularly surrounding the Soutpansberg mountain range, forms part of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, designated by UNESCO in 2009. This area is notable for its exceptionally high plant diversity, with approximately 24 distinct vegetation types, including 13 endemic and 5 near-endemic types. Two of these ecosystems are classified as threatened, highlighting the need for targeted conservation efforts.





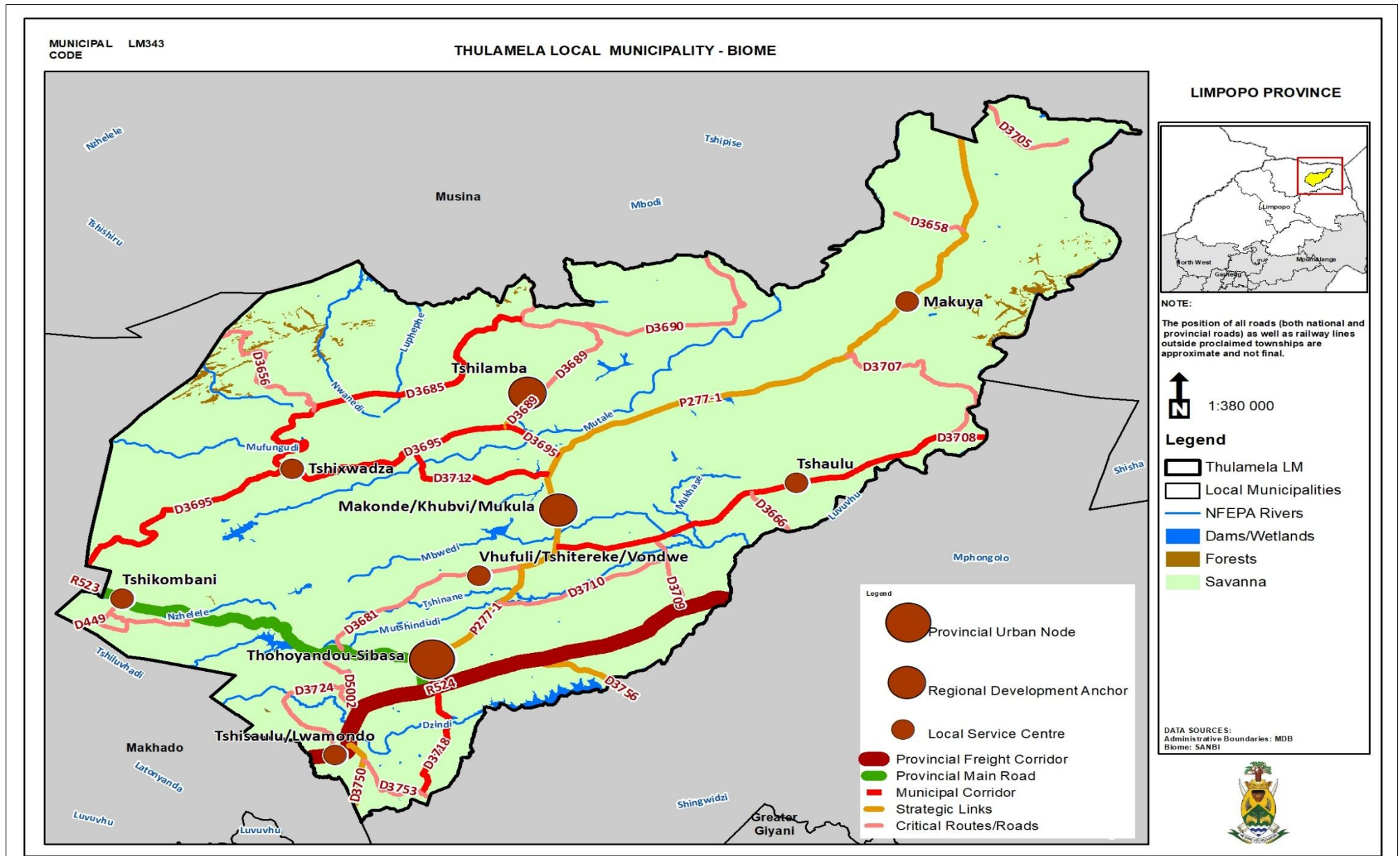
The municipality's diverse plant life supports local communities through the provision of essential resources for food, medicine, and cultural practices, as well as maintaining ecological processes such as soil fertility, water regulation, and habitat connectivity.

The management and protection of vegetation in TLM are informed by a combination of national legislation, provincial policies, and spatial planning frameworks. TLM SDF will align with these frameworks by integrating vegetation conservation into spatial planning, land-use management, and development control to ensure ecological integrity, resilience to climate change, and the sustainable use of natural resources.



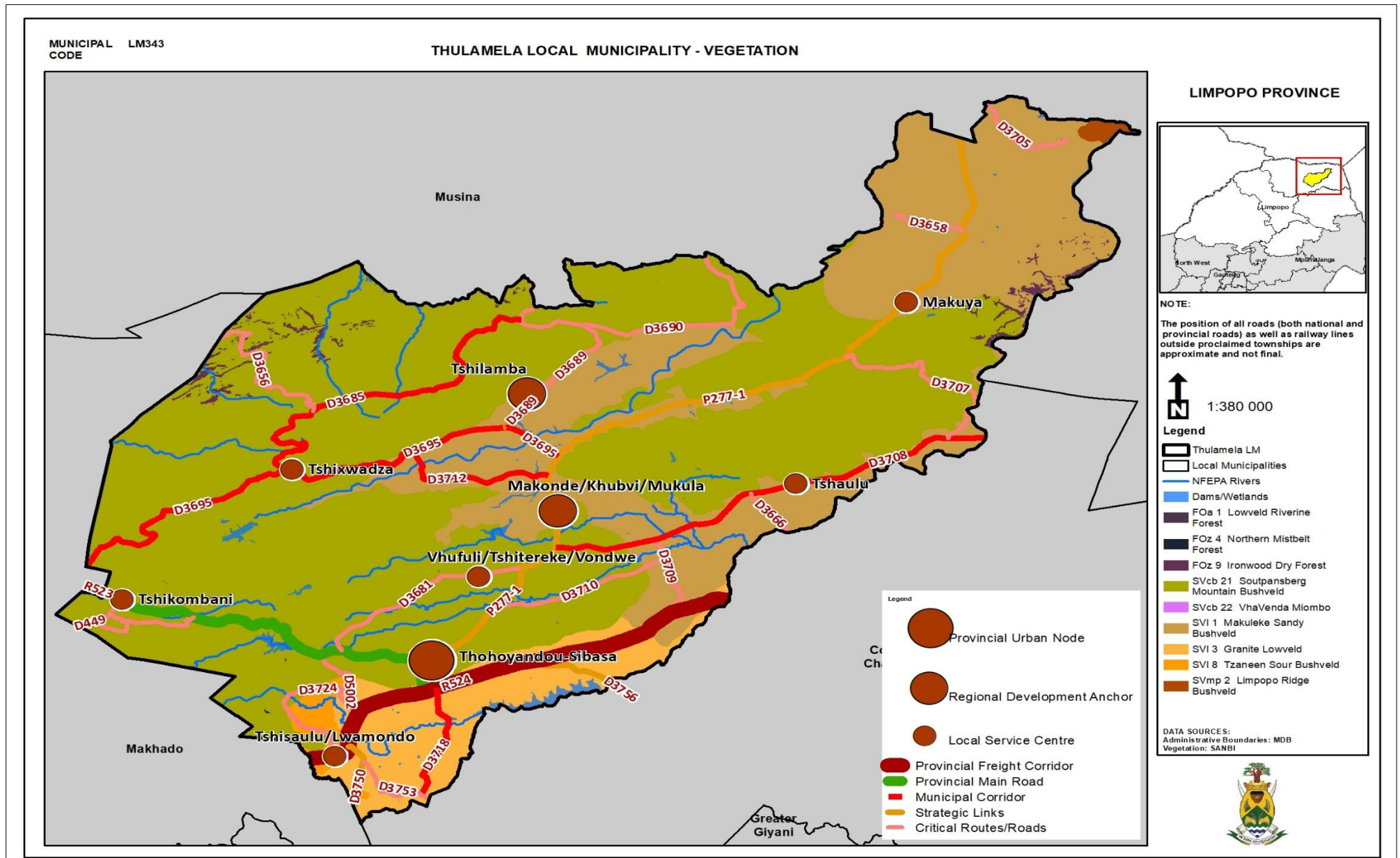


Map 8: Biome





Map 9: Vegetation





3.2.1.2 Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs)

Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) comprise both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that are essential for conserving biodiversity and sustaining critical ecosystem services. These areas underpin ecological processes, support the survival of various species, and contribute to the municipality's environmental resilience, aligning with both municipal and national conservation priorities (refer to Map 5).

Aquatic CBAs are primarily associated with rivers, drainage lines, and wetlands, including the Mutale, Luvuvhu, and Tshinane Rivers, among others. These watercourses are vital for maintaining aquatic biodiversity, regulating hydrological processes, and supporting the overall ecological health of the municipality. Wetlands within these areas perform unique ecological functions, including water purification, flood mitigation, and habitat provision for diverse species, making their conservation and sustainable management a priority.

Terrestrial CBAs are distributed across the municipality, with CBA 1 areas concentrated in the western, southwestern, and southern sectors, and CBA 2 areas located in the central, eastern, northeastern, and northern regions. These areas are characterised by high biodiversity value and frequently host rare, endemic, or threatened species.

Maintaining CBAs in their natural and functional state is imperative to safeguard ecological integrity, prevent habitat degradation, support ecosystem services, and mitigate species loss.

Legislative and Policy Context

The protection and management of CBAs in TLM are guided by a combination of national legislation, provincial frameworks, and international policy commitments:

- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, 1998, Act No. 107 of 1998): Provides the overarching legal framework for environmental governance, requiring that environmental considerations, including biodiversity and vegetation, are integrated into spatial planning and development approvals.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004, Act No. 10 of 2004): Establishes the legal basis for identifying, conserving, and managing CBAs and Ecological Support Areas (ESAs) to maintain ecosystem functionality and biodiversity.
- National Forests Act (1998, Act No. 84 of 1998): Protects indigenous forests and threatened tree species that occur within CBAs.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 13 & 15): Emphasise the protection of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, and climate-resilient natural resource management.
- National Development Plan (NDP 2030): Highlights the importance of ecological infrastructure, biodiversity corridors, and ecosystem services as enablers of sustainable livelihoods, climate adaptation, and rural economic development.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies CBAs, ESAs, and ecological networks as key spatial informants that





must guide development investment, land-use planning, and settlement expansion.

- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025-2030): Prioritise the sustainable management of biodiversity, ecological infrastructure, and climate-sensitive vegetation as critical to achieving inclusive provincial development and environmental resilience.

3.2.1.3 Ecological Support Areas (ESAs)

The identification, protection, and management of Ecological Support Areas (ESAs) within Thulamela Local Municipality are informed by a range of national, provincial, and local legislation and policy frameworks governing biodiversity conservation, land-use management, and sustainable development. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Section 24), provides the foundation for the protection of ecologically sensitive areas by guaranteeing the right to an environment that is not harmful to health or well-being and requiring sustainable use of natural resources.

The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), mandates the integration of environmental considerations into spatial planning and decision-making, while the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004), provides for the conservation of ecosystems and ecological processes that support Critical Biodiversity Areas, including terrestrial and aquatic ESAs. These legislative instruments require that land-use activities within ESAs be managed to avoid significant degradation of ecosystem functioning and biodiversity loss.

SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land), emphasise the protection of ecosystems, enhancement of climate resilience, and the sustainable management of land resources. These global commitments are reinforced by the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which highlights the importance of ecological infrastructure, biodiversity corridors, and ecosystem services in supporting sustainable settlements, disaster risk reduction, and long-term economic development.

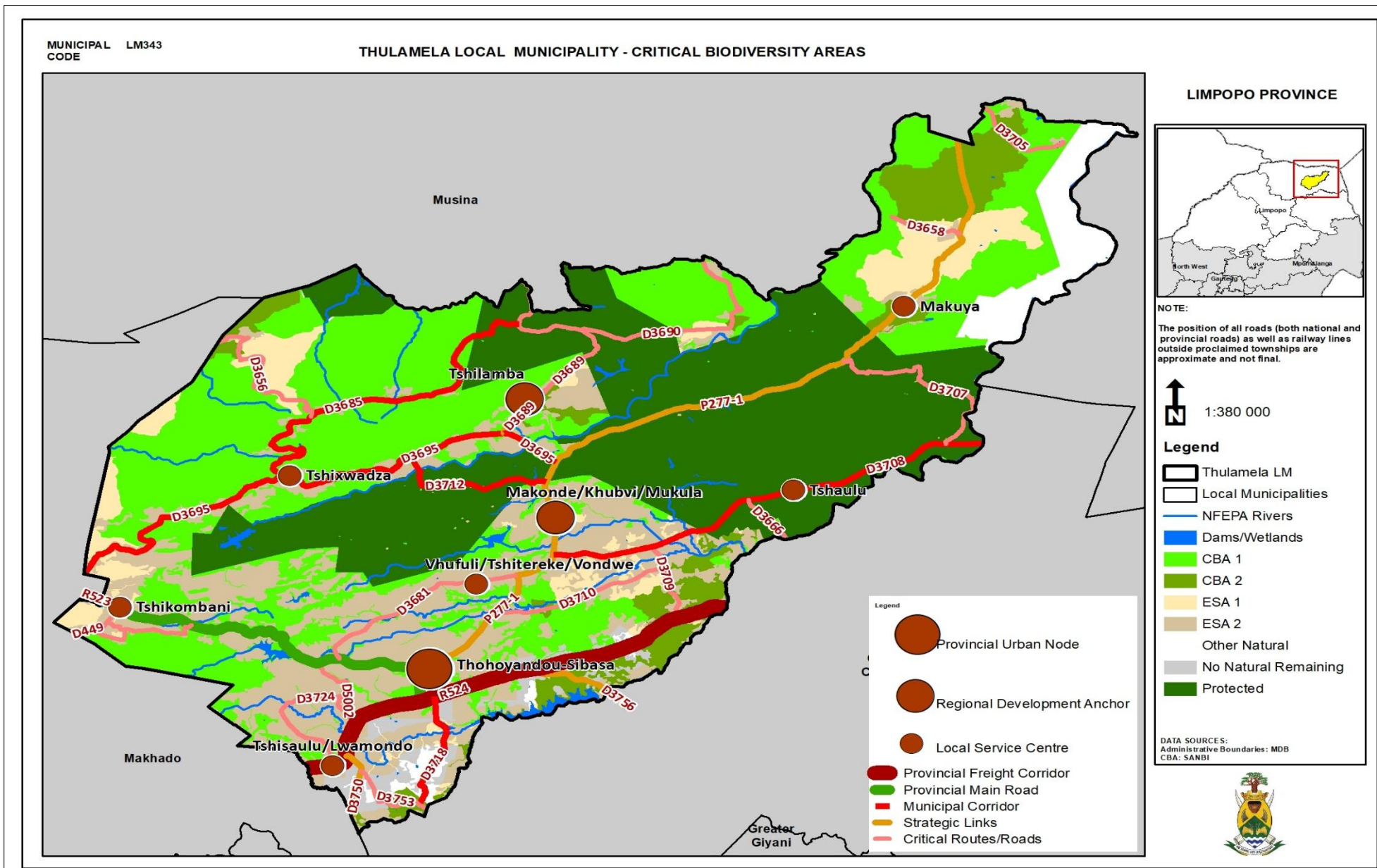
The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) recognises Ecological Support Areas, biodiversity corridors, wetlands, and catchment systems as critical spatial informants that must guide development patterns and infrastructure investment. In alignment with the NSDF, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) identified (NSAAs) ESAs as priority areas for environmental management, climate adaptation, and landscape connectivity, requiring development controls that ensure these areas remain in a functional ecological state.

The Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025) promotes the protection of ecological infrastructure, including ESAs, as a foundation for climate resilience, sustainable rural development, water security, and biodiversity-based economic opportunities. Accordingly, the designation of ESAs within Thulamela Local Municipality should inform land-use planning, environmental authorizations, and development control measures, ensuring that high-impact or incompatible land uses are restricted and that development within or adjacent to ESAs supports the continued functionality of Critical Biodiversity Areas and the delivery of essential ecosystem services.





Map 10: Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBAs) & Ecological Support Areas (ESAs)





3.2.1.4 Protected Areas

The establishment, protection, and management of protected areas within Thulamela Local Municipality are guided by an integrated framework of international commitments, national legislation, and spatial planning policies. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Section 24), provides the overarching mandate for environmental protection and sustainable development, ensuring that biodiversity and cultural heritage resources are conserved for the benefit of present and future generations.

At national level, the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEMPAA), 2003 (Act No. 57 of 2003), provides for the declaration and management of protected areas, including nature reserves, protected environments, and biosphere reserves, with the objective of conserving biodiversity while enabling sustainable socio-economic development. The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998, further requires that environmental considerations, including impacts on protected areas and indigenous vegetation, be integrated into spatial planning and land-use decision-making processes. In addition, the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999), provides legislative protection for archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, and sacred natural sites, including the Thulamela Archaeological Site and Vhutanda Sacred Natural Sites.

Internationally, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land), emphasise the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems, the protection of cultural heritage, and the integration of conservation objectives

into development planning. These commitments are reflected in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which recognises protected areas, biodiversity assets, and heritage resources as strategic national assets that contribute to ecological resilience, tourism development, rural livelihoods, and national identity.

The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) identifies protected areas, biosphere reserves, and heritage landscapes as key spatial structuring elements that must inform land-use planning, infrastructure investment, and development prioritisation. In alignment with the NSDF, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and the review of the current Thulamela Local Municipality Spatial Development Framework should emphasise the protection and integration of conservation and heritage areas into the broader spatial development framework, promoting buffer zones, compatible land uses, and conservation-led development approaches.

At the provincial level, the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025) highlights the role of protected areas and cultural heritage assets in advancing sustainable economic growth, eco-tourism, community-based conservation, and cultural preservation. The review of the Thulamela SDF should therefore support the objectives of the LDP (2025) by ensuring that protected areas, including the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, community-managed sacred sites, and declared heritage sites, are safeguarded through appropriate land-use controls, development guidelines, and environmental management measures, while enabling responsible tourism and local economic development that respect ecological and cultural values





Other significant protected areas include:

- ✚ Makuya Nature Reserve, which shares a fenceless border with the Kruger National Park.
- ✚ Mphaphuli Nature Reserve, known for its unique Modjaji cycad species
- ✚ Nwanedi Nature Reserve, encompassing the wooded foothills of the Soutpansberg Range.
- ✚ Mutavhatsindi Nature Reserve, established to protect the endangered *Brackenridgea zanguebarica* tree.
- ✚ Thohoyandou Botanical Garden, which hosts endemic plants from the Soutpansberg region and others.

These protected areas are threefold:

- ✚ They illustrate the close interrelationship between ecological diversity and cultural heritage, highlighting the need for integrated conservation approaches that safeguard natural ecosystems while recognising and respecting traditional knowledge systems and cultural practices.
- ✚ They demonstrate the convergence of biodiversity conservation and cultural heritage preservation, emphasising the importance of integrated, place-based conservation strategies that balance ecological integrity with the protection of traditional practices and historical assets.
- ✚ They underscore the interconnectedness of ecological systems and cultural heritage, reinforcing the need for coordinated conservation

strategies that protect biodiversity while supporting and respecting traditional and heritage-based land-use practices.







Table 6: General description of CBA map categories and associated land management objectives

CBA MAP CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	LAND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE	LAND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	MAP CODES
PROTECTED AREAS	Areas that are legally safeguarded and officially acknowledged under the Protected Areas Act. This also includes areas declared as protected through the biodiversity stewardship program, which involves agreements to ensure the conservation of biodiversity.	Maintain in a natural state with limited or no biodiversity loss. Rehabilitate degraded areas to a natural or near natural state and manage for no further degradation. Development subject to Protected Area objectives and zoning in a NEMPAA compliant and approved management plan.	Maintain or obtain formal conservation protection.	PA
CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS LEVEL 1	Irreplaceable Sites. Areas required to meet biodiversity pattern and/or ecological processes targets.	Maintain in a natural state with limited or no biodiversity loss. Rehabilitate degraded areas to a natural or near natural state and manage for no further degradation.	Obtain formal conservation protection where possible. Implement appropriate zoning to avoid net loss of intact habitat or intensification of land use.	CBA 1
CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREAS LEVEL 2	Areas selected to meet biodiversity pattern and/or ecological process targets.	Maintain in a natural state with limited or no biodiversity loss. Maintain current agricultural activities. Ensure that land use is not intensified and that are managed to minimise impact on threatened species.	Avoid conversion of agricultural land to more intensive land uses, which may have a negative impact on threatened species or ecological processes.	CBA 2
ECOLOGICAL SERVICE AREAS 1	Natural, near natural and degraded areas supporting CBAs by maintaining ecological processes.	Maintain ecosystem functionality and connectivity allowing for limited loss of biodiversity pattern	Implement appropriate zoning and land management guidelines to avoid impacting ecological processes. Avoid intensification of land use. Avoid fragmentation of natural landscape	ESA 1
ECOLOGICAL SERVICE AREAS 2	Areas with no natural habitat that is important for supporting ecological processes.	Avoid additional impacts on ecological processes.	Maintain current land-use. Avoid intensification of land use, which may result in additional impact on ecological processes.	ESA 2



3.2.2 Climate and rainfall

Thulamela Local Municipality experiences a subtropical climate, with the majority of rainfall occurring during the summer months, typically from October to March. Annual rainfall varies spatially, ranging from approximately 501–600 mm in the northern and north-eastern areas to over 601–700 mm in the southwestern parts of the municipality (refer to Map 7). Long-term average maximum temperatures in January range from 34°C in the northeast to 26°C in the southwest, while average minimum temperatures in July vary between 5°C in the west and 12°C in the northeast. The municipality's climate, characterised by warm, frost-free winters and hot summers, is favourable for the cultivation of a variety of annual and perennial crops under irrigation. Predominant winds blow from the east to southeast throughout the year, with average speeds of 11 km/h in summer, increasing to 15 km/h in winter.

The distribution and health of vegetation within Thulamela are directly influenced by these climatic conditions. Climate patterns, including rainfall variability, temperature extremes, and wind exposure, determine the composition of natural vegetation, the resilience of ecosystems, and the productivity of cultivated areas. The sustainable management of vegetation is supported by a suite of South African legislation and policy instruments. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24) guarantees the right to an environment that is not harmful to health or well-being and requires the sustainable use of natural resources. The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, 1998) and the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004) provide the legal framework

for protecting indigenous vegetation, conserving ecological processes, and integrating environmental considerations into land-use planning and development approvals.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land), emphasise climate-resilient land use, sustainable agriculture, and the protection of terrestrial ecosystems. These objectives are reinforced in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, which identifies biodiversity and ecological infrastructure as critical for climate adaptation, food security, and sustainable rural livelihoods. The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) recognises vegetation and ecological assets as key spatial informants that guide settlement planning, infrastructure investment, and disaster risk management. In alignment with these frameworks, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025) prioritise the conservation of climate-sensitive vegetation, the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, and the integration of ecological and agricultural planning into development initiatives within Thulamela.

Accordingly, the review of the Thulamela Spatial Development Framework should promote climate-responsive land-use planning and vegetation management practices that safeguard ecological integrity, enhance resilience to climate variability, support sustainable agriculture, and ensure the delivery of essential ecosystem services, thereby contributing to the municipality's socio-economic development and environmental sustainability objectives.

3.2.2.1 Evaporation





In Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), annual potential evaporation ranges between approximately 1,400 mm and 2,200 mm, with lower values in the western areas and higher values in the Soutpansberg Mountains. This high evaporation rate, coupled with spatial variability in rainfall, directly influences soil moisture availability, vegetation distribution, ecosystem productivity, and agricultural potential across the municipality. Areas with high evaporation are more susceptible to water stress, which affects the growth and resilience of natural vegetation, crop production, and the sustainability of critical ecosystems such as wetlands, riparian zones, and forest patches.

The sustainable management of vegetation in response to climatic factors such as evaporation is guided by South African legislation, policy frameworks, and international commitments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24): Guarantees the right to an environment that is not harmful to health or well-being and mandates the sustainable use of natural resources, including vegetation and water-dependent ecosystems.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, 1998, Act No. 107 of 1998): Provides the overarching framework for environmental governance, requiring that development and land-use decisions consider environmental factors, including vegetation sensitivity and water availability.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004, Act No. 10 of 2004): Protects ecosystems and indigenous vegetation,

particularly in areas vulnerable to water stress or high evaporation rates.

- National Water Act (1998, Act No. 36 of 1998): Supports sustainable management of water resources, including riverine and wetland vegetation, which are critical for maintaining ecosystem functionality in high-evaporation zones.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2, 6, 13, 15): Promote sustainable land and water use, climate adaptation, and the protection of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.
- National Development Plan (NDP 2030): Recognizes the importance of climate-resilient vegetation, ecological infrastructure, and sustainable agricultural practices to support food security, livelihoods, and ecosystem services.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies ecological infrastructure, biodiversity networks, and water-sensitive areas as key spatial informants for settlement planning and development investment.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025): Prioritise vegetation conservation, climate-sensitive land use, and sustainable management of ecological assets to enhance resilience to climate variability, including areas of high potential evaporation.





Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- **Vegetation and Ecosystem Health:** High evaporation rates increase water stress for natural vegetation, particularly in the Soutpansberg Mountains and low-rainfall western areas. This necessitates the protection of water-dependent ecosystems such as wetlands, riparian corridors, and forest patches to maintain ecological integrity and biodiversity.
- **Land-Use Planning and Agriculture:** Spatial planning must consider evaporation-driven water limitations to guide irrigation practices, crop selection, and land suitability assessments. Agriculture and development should be prioritised in areas with adequate water availability, while high-evaporation zones may require climate-smart interventions or conservation measures.
- **Biodiversity and Climate Resilience:** Maintaining vegetation cover in high-evaporation areas is critical for reducing soil degradation, supporting habitat connectivity, and enhancing resilience to climate change impacts, such as drought and increased fire risk.
- **Spatial Development and Environmental Management:** Land-use zoning, environmental authorisations, and development guidelines must integrate evaporation patterns, vegetation sensitivity, and water resource availability to ensure sustainable growth, ecosystem protection, and the delivery of ecosystem services.

3.2.2.2 Runoff

Within the A23 tertiary catchment of Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), the estimated natural mean annual runoff is approximately 0.10–0.12 km³ per

annum (100–120 million m³/year). However, anthropogenic pressures, particularly water abstractions for domestic, agricultural, and economic activities, have reduced current runoff levels to approximately 0.07–0.09 km³ per annum (70–90 million m³/year), resulting in an estimated annual deficit of 0.02–0.05 km³.

Although urban areas account for approximately 7% of the municipal land area, only 0.88% is classified as impervious surface, which marginally increases runoff volumes during rainfall events. In contrast, treated effluent discharges from urban wastewater treatment works contribute significantly to inter-basin transfers and play a critical role in sustaining base flows in rivers and streams during dry periods. Consequently, the current water balance within the catchment is increasingly dependent on a combination of reduced natural runoff and human-modified inflows, highlighting the growing importance of integrated water and land-use management approaches.

The management of surface water resources and associated vegetation systems in TLM is governed by a comprehensive legislative and policy framework:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24) mandates the protection of water resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.
- National Water Act (1998, Act No. 36 of 1998) provides the legal basis for the protection, use, development, conservation, and management of water resources, including the maintenance of





ecological reserves and the protection of riparian and wetland vegetation.

- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, 1998) requires the integration of environmental considerations, including impacts on water-dependent vegetation and ecosystems, into spatial planning and development decision-making.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004) supports the conservation of ecosystems and ecological processes that sustain riverine and wetland vegetation.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 6, 13, and 15) emphasise sustainable water management, climate resilience, and the protection of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 recognises water security and ecological infrastructure as fundamental to economic development, food security, and climate adaptation.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) identifies water systems, ecological infrastructure, and biodiversity networks as critical spatial informants guiding settlement development and infrastructure investment.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025) prioritise integrated catchment management, protection of riparian vegetation, and sustainable water use to enhance environmental resilience and support inclusive provincial growth.



Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Vegetation and Ecosystem Integrity: Reduced natural runoff places increased pressure on riparian zones, wetlands, and water-dependent vegetation. Protecting and restoring these ecosystems is essential to maintain base flows, improve water quality, and sustain biodiversity.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use: Development planning must be aligned with water availability constraints. High-water-demand land uses should be carefully managed within stressed catchments, while ecological infrastructure such as river corridors and wetlands must be safeguarded through appropriate zoning and buffers.
- Urban Development and Infrastructure: The contribution of stormwater runoff and treated effluent to river flows highlights the need for water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) approaches, including green infrastructure and improved wastewater management, to enhance ecosystem services and reduce pressure on natural systems.
- Climate Resilience and Sustainable Development: Integrated water resource and vegetation management is critical to improving resilience to climate variability, supporting sustainable livelihoods, and ensuring long-term water security in line with the objectives of the current Thulamela SDF, LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025).

3.2.2.3 Air Quality

Air quality within Thulamela Local Municipality is influenced by a combination of anthropogenic activities and natural processes, with implications for human health, vegetation integrity, and ecosystem functioning.





a) Traffic and Vehicle Emissions

A vehicle emission inventory for Thulamela Municipality (2012–2021) indicates a steady increase in vehicle activity, identifying road transport as a major source of air pollutants, particularly nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and carbon monoxide (CO). These pollutants contribute to ambient air quality degradation, with adverse effects on human health and on sensitive vegetation, including crops and indigenous plant species.

b) Mining Operations

Mining activities within TLM are largely limited to small-scale sand and gravel extraction in peri-urban areas, rural towns, and villages. These operations generate significant dust emissions, which degrade local air quality and pose health risks to nearby communities through increased particulate matter exposure. While no large-scale mining of coal, chrome, or heavy metal deposits currently occurs within the municipality, historical activities such as the Tshikondeni Coal Mine and ongoing operations such as the Vhavenda Bricks facility in Lwamondo continue to influence local environmental conditions.

c) Forest, Bush, and Veld Fires

Seasonal forest, bush, and veld fires are a major contributor to air pollution in TLM, particularly during the dry winter months when vegetation becomes highly flammable. These fires release large quantities of particulate matter and greenhouse gases, negatively affecting air quality, reducing visibility, and damaging vegetation and soil structure.

d) Industrial Activities

The Shayandima Industrial Area remains the municipality's only formal industrial precinct, with activities focused mainly on agro-processing, packaging, storage, and building materials. Heavy and noxious industries are absent. While the industrial sector has experienced stagnation and decline following the phasing out of Regional Industrial Development Point (RIDP) incentives, small- and medium-sized enterprises continue to operate, particularly in light manufacturing and processing activities. Additional light industrial hubs are located within nodal points and Strategic Development Areas (SDAs), including Sibasa/Makwarela, Ha-Makhuvha Tshilivho, Vhufuli, and Tshisaulu. These hubs primarily service local communities and contribute modestly to local emissions.

e) Atmospheric Transport and Natural Emissions

Air quality in TLM is further shaped by the interaction of emissions from vehicles, biomass and waste burning, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and natural biological particles such as pollen and fungal spores.

Prevailing wind patterns, calm atmospheric conditions, and winter temperature inversions can trap pollutants near ground level, increasing exposure risks for both communities and vegetation.

f) Other Unregulated Emission Sources

Informal waste burning at open dumps, including plastics, tyres, and cables, releases toxic pollutants such as heavy metals, black carbon, dioxins, and fine





particulates. In addition, widespread reliance on firewood for cooking and heating in rural areas contributes to indoor and outdoor air pollution and accelerates deforestation, further reducing the municipality's natural vegetation cover and carbon sequestration capacity.

Legislative and Policy Context (Air Quality and Vegetation)

Air quality management and its interaction with vegetation are governed by the following legislative and policy frameworks:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24): Provides the right to an environment that is not harmful to health or well-being.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, 1998): Establishes principles for sustainable development and requires pollution prevention and environmental protection.
- National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act (NEMAQA, 2004): Regulates air pollution sources and promotes ambient air quality management.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004): Protects ecosystems and vegetation that contribute to air quality regulation and climate resilience.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 3, 11, 13, and 15): Promote healthy living environments, reduced air pollution, climate action, and ecosystem protection.

- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Recognizes clean air and healthy ecosystems as prerequisites for sustainable development and improved quality of life.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies environmental quality, ecological infrastructure, and climate resilience as key spatial informants.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025): Emphasize sustainable settlement development, pollution management, and protection of vegetation to enhance environmental resilience and public health.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Vegetation and Ecosystem Health: Poor air quality negatively affects vegetation health, agricultural productivity, and ecosystem services. Protecting and expanding green infrastructure, including urban trees, riparian vegetation, and natural buffers, is essential for improving air quality and ecosystem resilience.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use: Land-use planning must separate sensitive land uses from pollution-generating activities, promote compact settlement patterns, and support non-motorized transport to reduce vehicle emissions.
- Fire and Biomass Management: Improved fire management strategies, including fire breaks and community awareness programs, are required to reduce uncontrolled veld fires and associated emissions.



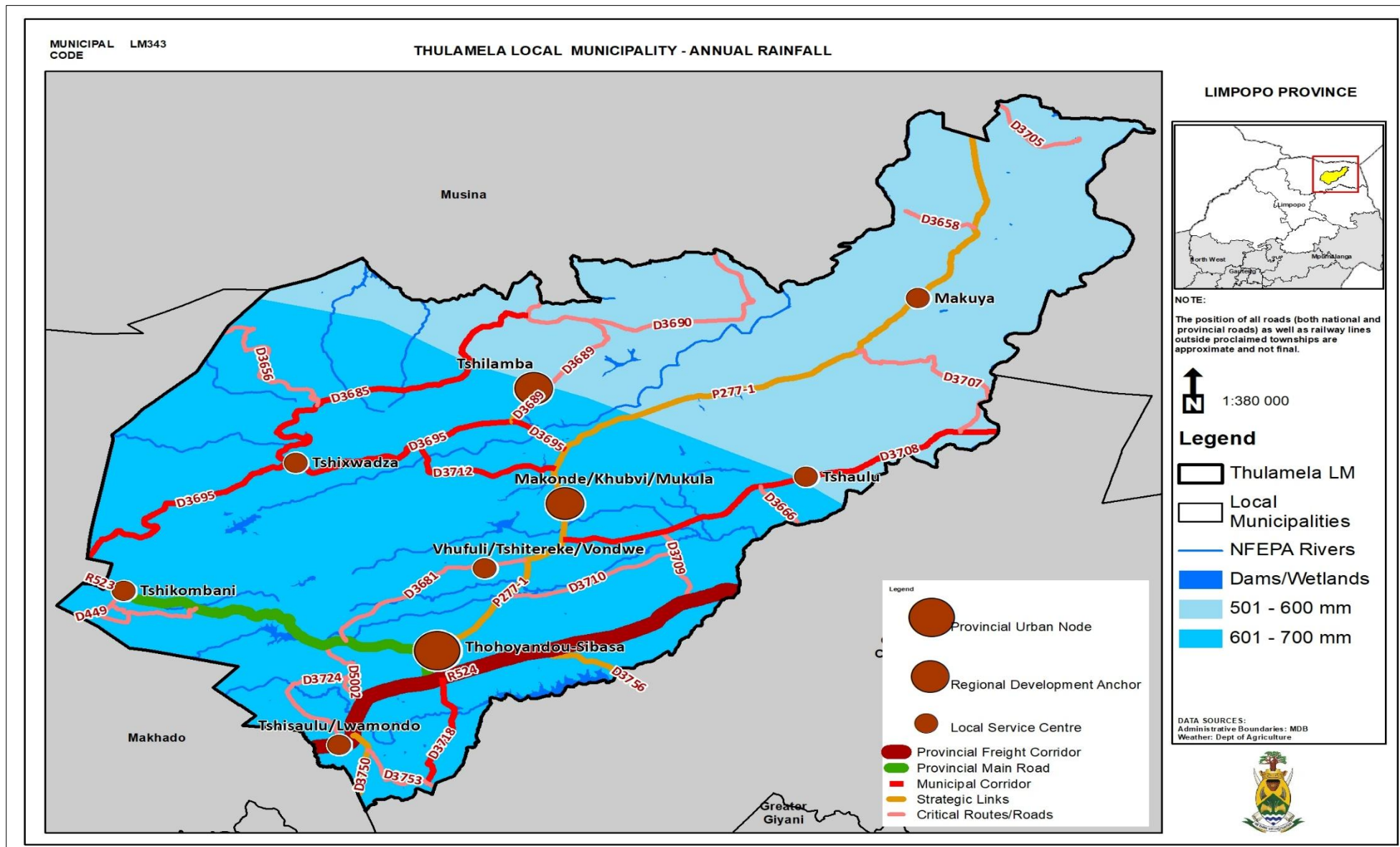


- **Waste and Energy Practices:** Strengthening waste management systems and promoting alternative energy sources can reduce open burning and pressure on natural vegetation.
- **Climate and Development Resilience:** Integrating air quality considerations into the Thulamela SDF, aligned with the NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025), will support healthier communities, protect vegetation resources, and contribute to long-term environmental sustainability.





Map 12: Annual Rainfall





3.2.3 Topography and Hydrology

3.2.3.1 Topography

Variations in topography, including differences in altitude and landscape form, play a significant role in shaping local climatic conditions within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). The municipal landscape is generally characterised by gently undulating terrain interspersed with prominent mountainous features, most notably the Soutpansberg mountain range (refer to Map 8). These topographic characteristics influence temperature gradients, rainfall distribution, soil formation, and vegetation patterns, thereby shaping land-use suitability across the municipality.

Topography is a key determinant of settlement development and agricultural potential in TLM. Areas with gentle slopes are more suitable for human settlement and infrastructure development and, as a result, tend to accommodate higher population densities. In contrast, steep slopes associated with mountainous areas are generally unsuitable for cultivation and extensive development due to increased susceptibility to soil erosion, slope instability, and land degradation. In some instances, these slopes have been utilised for pine plantations, which benefit from higher moisture availability resulting from fog interception and orographic rainfall, although such land uses require careful management to prevent negative impacts on indigenous vegetation and water resources.

Legislative and Policy Framework

The management of topography-related environmental constraints and associated vegetation systems in TLM is informed by the following legislative and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24): Provides the foundation for sustainable land use and environmental protection.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, 1998): Requires that environmental sensitivity, including slope, erosion risk, and vegetation impacts, be integrated into planning and development decisions.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004): Supports the conservation of ecosystems and vegetation, particularly in environmentally sensitive and mountainous areas.
- National Forests Act (1998): Regulates plantation forestry and protects indigenous forests and tree species.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 11, 13, and 15): Promote sustainable settlements, climate resilience, and the protection of terrestrial ecosystems.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Recognises the importance of environmentally informed land-use planning to support sustainable human settlements, agriculture, and ecosystem services.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies topography, biodiversity assets, and environmental constraints as key spatial informants guiding development patterns and infrastructure investment.



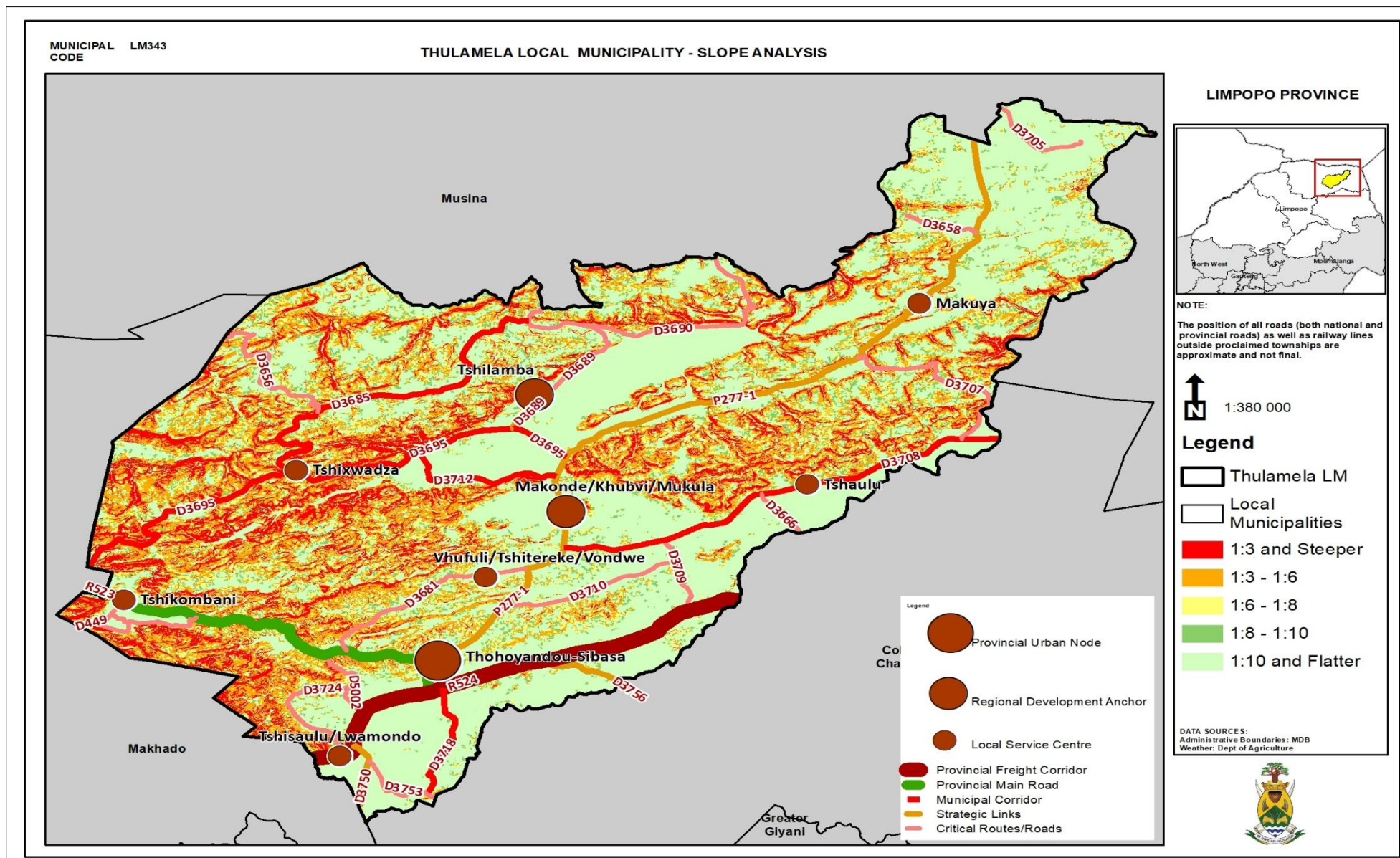


- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025): Emphasise environmentally sustainable land use, protection of sensitive landscapes, and climate-resilient agricultural and settlement planning.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Settlement Planning: Development should be prioritised on gentle slopes to reduce construction risks, infrastructure costs, and environmental degradation, while steep slopes should be protected from inappropriate development.
- Agriculture and Forestry: Agricultural activities should be aligned with slope suitability to minimise erosion and land degradation. Plantation forestry in mountainous areas must be carefully managed to prevent adverse impacts on indigenous vegetation, biodiversity, and water resources.
- Vegetation Conservation: Steep and mountainous areas often support sensitive and high-value vegetation types and should be prioritised for conservation or limited-use activities to maintain ecological integrity.
- Environmental Risk Management: Slope-related erosion, landslide risk, and runoff must be addressed through appropriate land-use controls, buffer zones, and soil conservation measures.
- Spatial Planning Alignment: Incorporating topographic constraints into the Thulamela SDF, in line with the NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025), will promote sustainable settlement patterns, protect vegetation resources, and enhance climate resilience.







3.2.3.2 Hydrology

Variations in topography, including differences in altitude and landscape form, play a significant role in shaping local climatic conditions and hydrological processes within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). The interaction between the municipality's gently undulating lowlands and the elevated Soutpansberg Mountain Range influences rainfall distribution, surface runoff, river formation, and groundwater recharge, thereby shaping vegetation patterns and land-use potential across the municipal area.

TLM is well drained by an extensive network of perennial rivers, including the Mutale, Mutshundudi, Mutangwi, and Tshinane rivers, as well as the Luvuvhu River. These river systems form part of the Limpopo River catchment and ultimately drain into the Limpopo River, which constitutes part of the international boundary between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The river corridors and associated riparian zones support high-value vegetation, ecological connectivity, and essential ecosystem services such as water purification, flood attenuation, and biodiversity conservation.

The municipality contains five key surface water bodies, namely Vondo, Damani, and Nandoni dams, as well as Mbwedi and Fundudzi lakes (refer to Map 9). These strategic water resources are managed by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and play a critical role in regional water security. Vondo and Damani dams constitute the primary water supply sources for Thulamela Local Municipality, while Nandoni Dam serves as a major regional supply system supporting the wider Vhembe District and northern parts of the Mopani District. These water bodies also support surrounding

natural vegetation, wetlands, and riparian ecosystems, which are highly sensitive to land-use change and water abstraction pressures.

The protection and management of hydrological systems and associated vegetation in TLM are guided by the following legislative and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Section 24
Establishes the right to an environment that is not harmful to health and wellbeing and promotes sustainable use of natural resources, including water and vegetation systems.
- National Water Act (1998, Act 36 of 1998)
Provides the primary legal framework for the protection, use, development, conservation, and management of water resources, including rivers, wetlands, and dams.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998
Requires environmentally sensitive planning and the protection of ecological systems, including riparian vegetation and aquatic ecosystems.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), 2004
Supports the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity associated with rivers, wetlands, and aquatic environments.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 6, 11, 13 and 15)
Promote sustainable water management, climate resilience, sustainable settlements, and the protection of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.



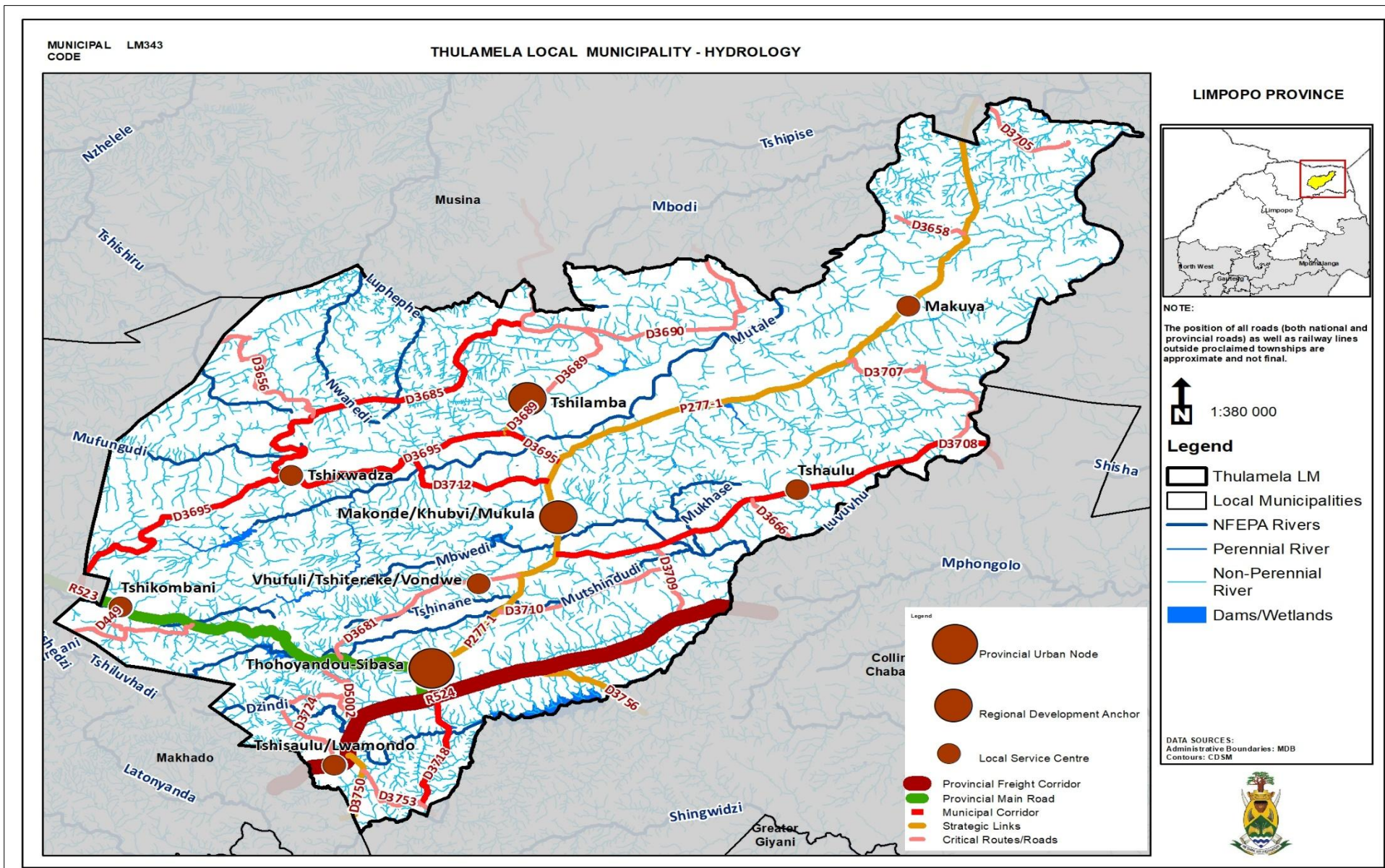


- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030
Emphasises water security, ecosystem protection, and integrated spatial planning as foundations for inclusive and sustainable development.
 - National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), 2022,
Identifies water resources, river systems, and ecological infrastructure as critical spatial informants guiding development and infrastructure investment.
 - Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2025 and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP), 2025
Advocate for the protection of strategic water resources, riparian buffers, and climate-resilient land-use planning aligned with ecological capacity.
- ✚ Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality:
- Spatial and Settlement Planning: Development must be directed away from river corridors, wetlands, and dam catchment areas through appropriate buffer zones and environmental overlays within the SDF to protect water quality and associated vegetation.
 - Water Resource Protection: Catchment management around Vondo, Damani, and Nandoni dams should be prioritised to prevent pollution, sedimentation, and degradation of riparian and wetland vegetation that underpin long-term water security.
 - Vegetation and Biodiversity Conservation: Riparian zones and wetland systems should be conserved as ecological infrastructure, supporting biodiversity, ecological connectivity, and climate resilience.
 - Climate Change Adaptation: Healthy river systems and associated vegetation enhance resilience to climate variability by regulating runoff, reducing flood risk, and maintaining base flows during dry periods.
 - Intergovernmental Alignment: Integrated planning with the Department of Water and Sanitation, in alignment with the NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025), is essential to ensure sustainable water resource management and environmentally responsible development within TLM.





Map 14: Hydrology





3.2.4 Geology and Soils

3.2.4.1 Geology

Variations in topography, including differences in altitude and landscape form, play a significant role in shaping local climatic conditions, soil characteristics, and vegetation distribution within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). The geological foundation of the municipality is largely defined by the Soutpansberg Group of rocks, which form a distinctive wedge-shaped mountainous landscape. The Soutpansberg Mountain Range creates a prominent escarpment along the north-eastern and north-western boundaries of the municipality, exerting a strong influence on rainfall patterns, drainage systems, and associated vegetation communities.

The Soutpansberg Group comprises a sequence of volcanic and sedimentary rock formations, subdivided into seven geological units. These formations give rise to diverse soil types and landforms that support a variety of vegetation types, many of which are adapted to shallow, rocky soils and steep slopes. The geological diversity of the Soutpansberg underpins the high levels of plant endemism and ecological sensitivity found in these mountainous areas.

The geological composition of TLM contains limited economically viable mineral resources. Only minor copper deposits occur in the north-eastern parts of the municipality, and these are not considered commercially significant (refer to Map 10). As a result, the long-term value of the Soutpansberg geological landscape lies less in extractive potential and more in its ecological, hydrological, agricultural, and cultural functions.

The management of geological landscapes, topography, and vegetation within TLM is guided by the following legislation and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Section 24 Mandates the protection of ecologically sustainable development and responsible use of natural resources.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998 Requires that environmental sensitivity, including geological instability, slope, and vegetation impacts, be considered in land-use planning and development approvals.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), 2004 Provides for the protection of ecosystems and species associated with sensitive geological and mountainous landscapes.
- Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA), 2002 Regulates mineral resource development while requiring environmental management and rehabilitation, noting that limited mining potential reduces pressure for extractive land uses in TLM.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 Promotes environmentally informed spatial planning, protection of ecological assets, and sustainable land use over short-term extractive gains.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 11, 13 and 15) Support sustainable settlements, climate resilience, and the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), 2022 Identifies environmentally sensitive geological and mountainous areas





as spatial structuring elements that should guide settlement patterns and infrastructure investment.

- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2025 and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP), 2025
Emphasise landscape protection, biodiversity conservation, and climate-resilient land-use planning in mountainous and ecologically sensitive areas.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

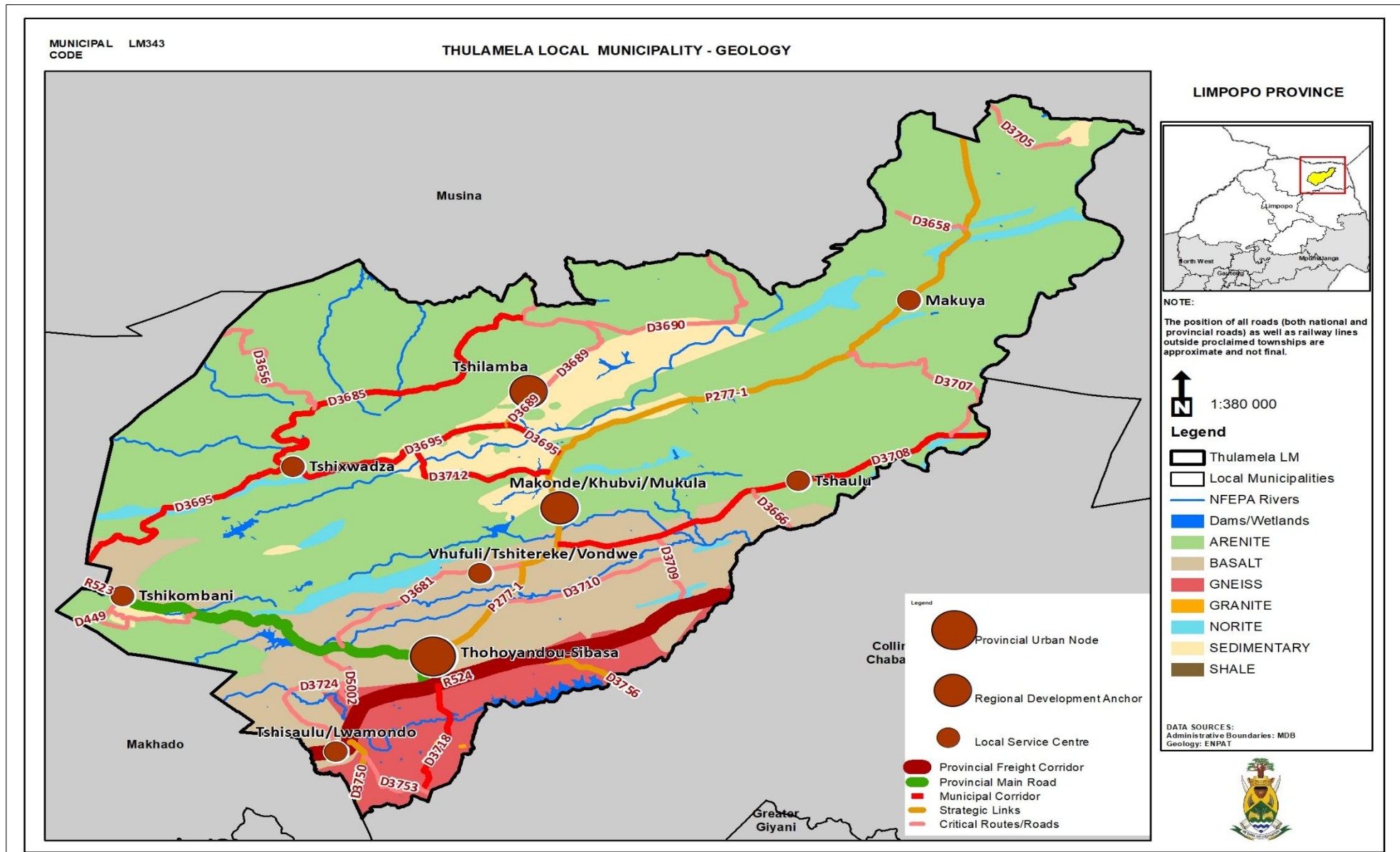
- Spatial Planning and Development Control: Steep and geologically sensitive areas associated with the Soutpansberg Group should be excluded from intensive development and appropriately reflected as environmental constraint zones within the SDF.
- Vegetation and Biodiversity Conservation: The geological diversity and associated soil conditions support unique and often endemic vegetation types, necessitating strong conservation measures and limited land-use change in mountainous areas.
- Economic Development Strategy: Given the limited mineral potential, economic development should prioritise eco-tourism, conservation-based livelihoods, sustainable agriculture, and cultural heritage initiatives rather than extractive industries.
- Environmental Risk Management: Land-use planning must account for erosion risk, slope instability, and soil limitations linked to geological formations, with appropriate mitigation measures applied where development is unavoidable.

- Policy and Intergovernmental Alignment: The integration of geological and topographic constraints into the Thulamela SDF, in line with the NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025), will support sustainable development outcomes while safeguarding vegetation and ecosystem services.





Map 15: Geology





3.2.4.2 Soils

Variations in topography, including differences in altitude and landscape form, play a significant role in shaping local climatic conditions, soil formation processes, and vegetation distribution within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). The interaction between mountainous terrain, undulating plains, and drainage patterns has resulted in a diverse range of soil types, each with varying agricultural potential, erosion susceptibility, and capacity to support different vegetation communities.

A large portion of soils within TLM is characterised by Eutric Leptosols (LPe) and Lithic Leptosols (LPq), particularly in mountainous and shallow-soil areas associated with the Soutpansberg range. These soils are typically shallow, stony, and weakly developed, supporting natural vegetation adapted to low soil depth and limiting intensive agricultural use. Haplic Lixisols (LXh) and Rhodic Nitisols (NTr) occur in more gently sloping areas and are generally deeper and more fertile, making them suitable for certain forms of agriculture where conservation measures are applied.

Significant areas of Eutric Plinthosols (PTe) and Eutric Regosols are found around the Tshaulu and Lwamondo nodal points along the boundary shared with Collins Chabane Local Municipality (CCLM). These soils are often constrained by poor drainage, seasonal waterlogging, or weak structure, which influences both land-use suitability and vegetation composition. In contrast, soils in the Tshikombani and Vhufuli areas are characterised by Haplic (Ach) and Calcaric Cambisols (CMc), which offer moderate agricultural potential but remain sensitive to erosion if not properly managed. Ferralic

Arenosols (ARo) and Luvisols (LVf) are also present across the municipality, further contributing to the spatial variability of vegetation and land-use capability (refer to Map 11).

The management of soil resources, vegetation, and land capability within TLM is guided by the following legislative and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Section 24 Provides the basis for sustainable land management and protection of soil and vegetation resources.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998 Requires land-use decisions to consider soil capability, erosion risk, and impacts on vegetation and ecosystems.
- Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (CARA), 1983 Regulates soil conservation, erosion control, and sustainable agricultural practices.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), 2004 Supports the protection of ecosystems linked to specific soil and vegetation types.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2, 11, 13 and 15) Promote sustainable agriculture, resilient settlements, climate adaptation, and protection of terrestrial ecosystems.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 Emphasises sustainable land use, protection of productive agricultural soils, and ecosystem services.





- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), 2022
Identifies soil capability and environmental sensitivity as key spatial informants for development planning.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2025 and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP), 2025
Advocate for land-use planning aligned with soil capability, vegetation protection, and climate-resilient agricultural development.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

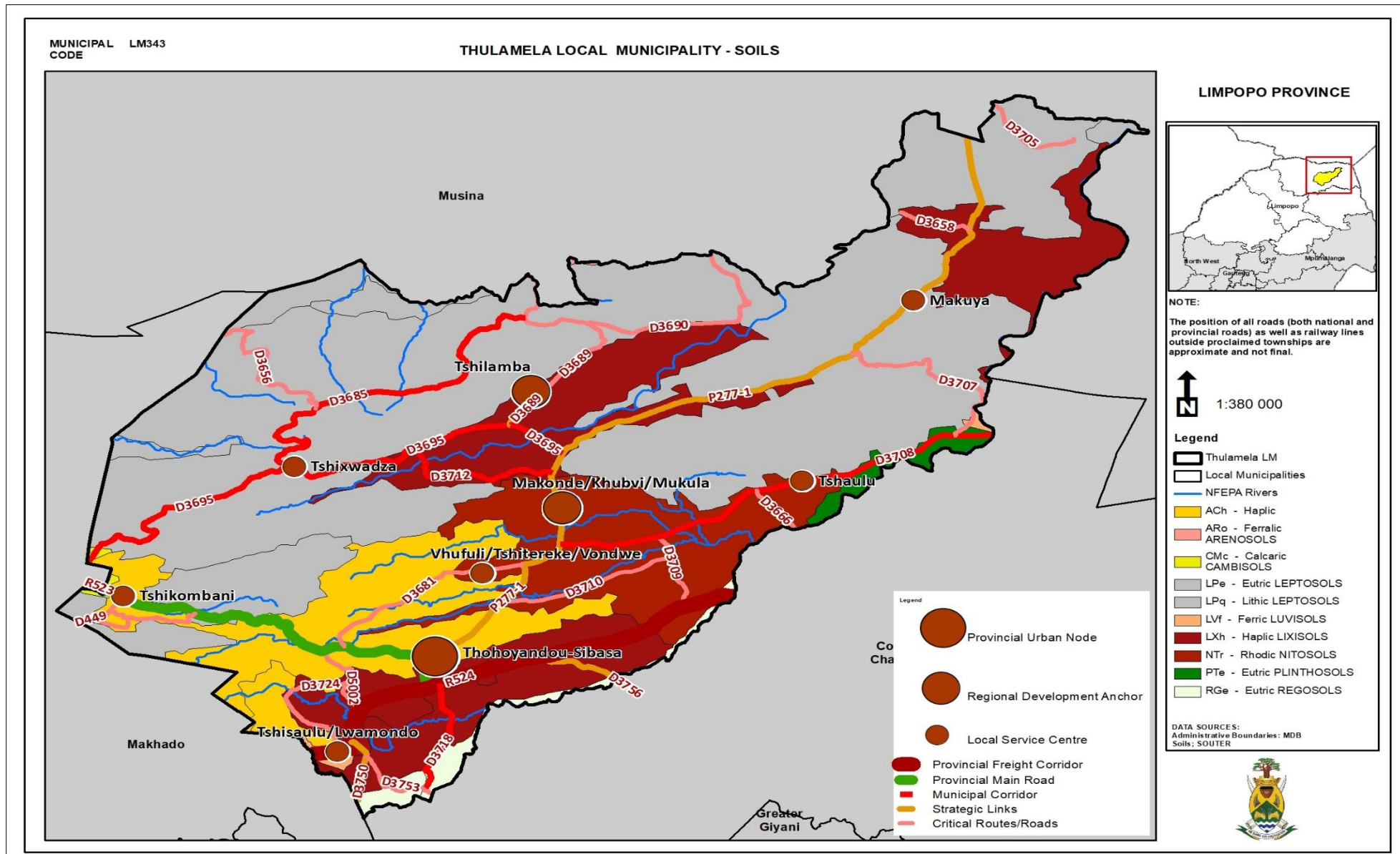
- Land-Use Planning and Zoning: Soil capability should inform spatial development proposals, with shallow and erosion-prone soils (Leptosols and Regosols) designated for conservation, extensive grazing, or low-intensity uses rather than dense settlement or intensive agriculture.
- Agricultural Development: Areas with deeper and more fertile soils such as Nitisols, Lixisols, and Cambisols should be prioritised for agricultural development, subject to sustainable farming practices and soil conservation measures.
- Vegetation and Ecosystem Protection: Soil-vegetation relationships must be maintained, particularly in mountainous and ecologically sensitive areas, to prevent land degradation and loss of biodiversity.
- Environmental Risk Management: Inappropriate land use on Plinthosols and shallow soils increases the risk of erosion, compaction, and reduced productivity, necessitating careful development control and rehabilitation measures.

- Spatial Policy Alignment: Integrating soil capability mapping into the Thulamela SDF, in alignment with the NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025), will promote sustainable land use, protect vegetation systems, and support long-term socio-economic resilience.





Map 16: Soils





3.2.5 Agricultural Land Capability

Agricultural potential within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) is largely determined by land capability, which is influenced by variations in topography, rainfall, soil quality, and water availability. The western part of the municipality is characterised by high-altitude mountainous terrain and comparatively high rainfall, averaging between 1,000 mm and 1,200 mm per annum. Rainfall decreases progressively towards the eastern parts of the municipality, reaching as low as 400–500 mm in areas adjacent to the Kruger National Park. Soil fertility follows a similar west–east gradient, with more productive soils in the west and poorer-quality soils in the east.

The western region is predominantly suitable for forestry and grazing, with pockets of arable land occurring where slopes are gentler and soils are deeper and more fertile. This area forms part of the fertile Luvuvhu Valley, which supports the Luvuvhu Irrigation Scheme and commercial production of sub-tropical crops such as bananas, macadamias, and mangoes. In contrast, the far north-eastern areas, as well as smaller pockets in the northern and southern parts of the municipality, are primarily suited to grazing due to low rainfall and generally low agricultural potential.

Areas with moderate agricultural potential occur in the central-northern region around Khubvi along the Mutale River and in the south-eastern parts of the municipality along the Luvuvhu River, closer to the Kruger National Park, where soils are more conducive to cultivation. However, agricultural viability in TLM

is not solely dependent on soil quality, but is also strongly influenced by water availability, with only limited areas of high-potential arable land present.

Large portions of the area between Thohoyandou, Makonde, Tshaulu, and Tshilamba are classified as marginally arable, while the central-western zone around Thohoyandou and Lwamondo exhibits moderate agricultural potential. Overall, agricultural productivity declines from west to east in line with the rainfall gradient. Notably, the western region, which possesses the highest agricultural potential, is also experiencing increasing urban expansion, resulting in growing competition between agricultural land uses and settlement development.

3.2.5.1 Current Agricultural Activities

- Forestry plantations are predominantly located in the far western part of Thulamela Local Municipality, particularly between Khalavha and Phiphidi. These areas benefit from higher rainfall and favourable climatic conditions. Commercial orchards are mainly concentrated in the western parts of the municipality around Thathe Vondo Dam, as well as in the area between Khubvi and Tshaulu, where access to water resources and suitable soils supports horticultural production.
- Cultivated fields and subsistence farming activities are widely distributed across the municipality, with a strong concentration along river corridors and floodplains, particularly those associated with the Mutshundudi, Mutale, and Luvuvhu rivers.



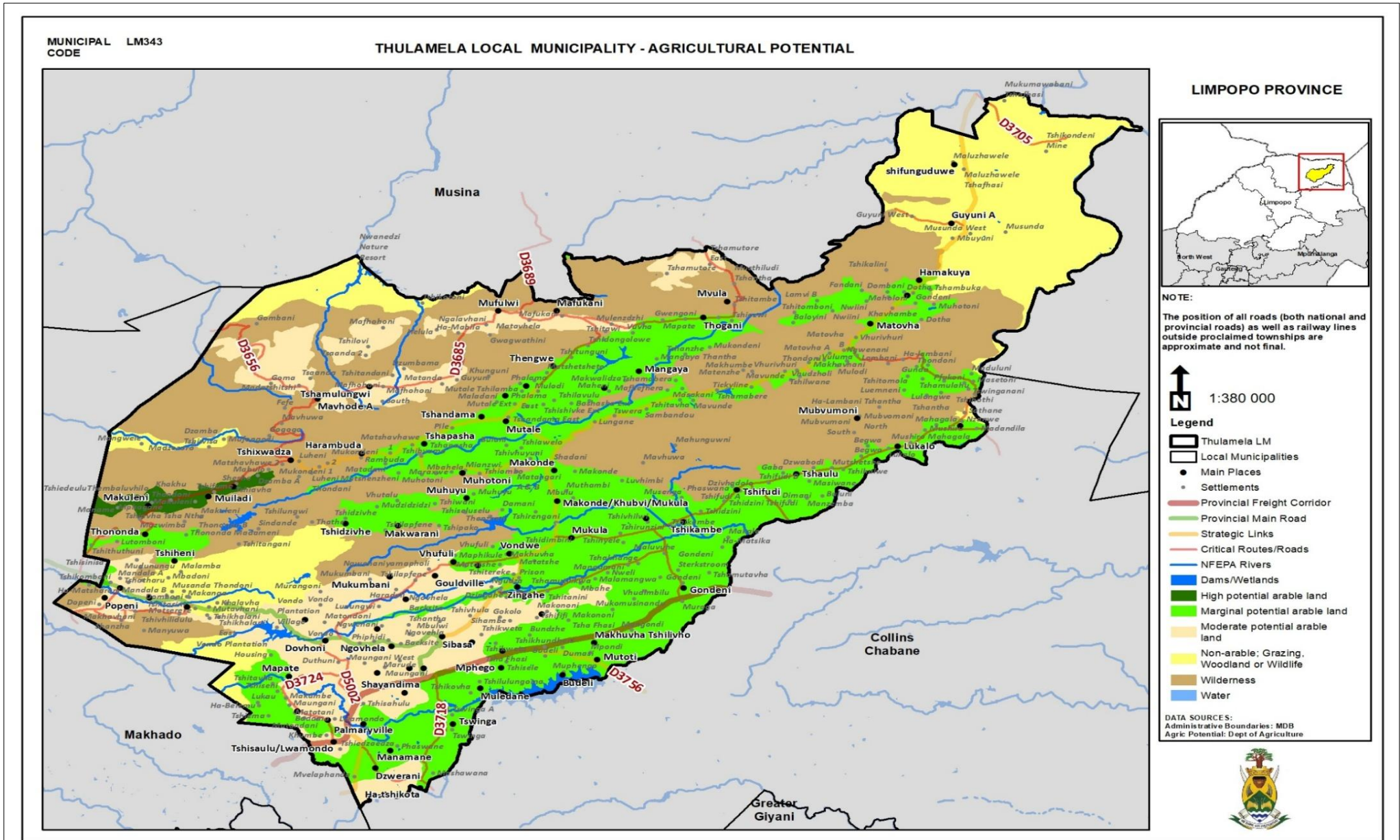


- These areas provide relatively fertile soils and improved moisture availability, making them suitable for small-scale crop production.
- Irrigated agriculture within TLM is largely limited to small-scale operations, notably in Tshiombo and Mbahela within the Tshilamba area. Additional smallholder irrigation schemes, both operational and non-operational, include Dopeni, Dzindi, Dzwerani, Khumbe, Malavumwe, Matsika, Murara, Palmaryville (Gondeni), Phaswana, Rambuda, and Tshaulu. These schemes represent important opportunities for enhancing local food security and livelihoods but require investment and institutional support to achieve optimal productivity.
- Extensive grazing land dominates much of the northern and eastern parts of the municipality, particularly along the boundaries shared with Musina Local Municipality (MLM) and Collins Chabane Local Municipality (CCLM), where lower rainfall and soil limitations reduce the suitability for intensive crop cultivation.
- Agro-processing activities within TLM remain limited, with a relatively small number of processing plants and facilities currently operational. The underdevelopment of agro-processing continues to present a significant challenge, constraining value addition, market access, and employment creation within the local agricultural economy.





Map 17: Agricultural Potential





3.3 SOCIO ECONOMIC

The purpose of this socio-economic analysis is to provide brief perspective of the dominant demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the TLM. The other purpose is to identify possible issues to be considered that may be influential in the Review of the SDF. The information that was used is based on the new municipal boundaries for TLM as per Municipal Demarcations Board (MDB) and StatsSA Census 2022 Data was used.

3.3.1 TLM Key Statistics

Table 7: Key Statistics of the TLM

Key statistics	2022	2011
Total population	575 929	450 131
Young children (0-14 years)	31,8%	34,0%
Working age population (15-64 years)	61,7%	59,8%
Elderly (65+ years)	6,5%	6,1%
Dependency ratio	62,0	67,1
Sex ratio	87,2	83,6
No schooling (20+ years)	13,4%	14,5%
Higher education (20+ years)	13,9%	12,8%
Number of households	142 527	114 001
Average household size	4,0	3,9
Formal dwellings	96,4%	91,5%
Flush toilets connected to sewerage	28,1%	13,6%
Weekly refuse disposal service	28,9%	13,5%
Access to piped water in the dwelling	26,0%	17,1%
Electricity for lighting	97,7%	87,2%

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2022

The municipality experienced a notable population increase of over 28%, alongside a growing number of households and a slight rise in average household size. This growth places increased pressure on existing infrastructure and public services. While improvements in access to electricity, formal housing, and basic services such as sanitation and refuse removal are evident, access to piped water and sewerage remains limited, pointing to critical infrastructure backlogs. The shift toward a more economically active population and declining dependency ratio suggests a need for integrated spatial planning that supports employment, education, and mobility. The relatively high proportion of formal dwellings presents an opportunity to consolidate and upgrade existing settlements. The rise in household numbers also means spatial plans must accommodate new residential developments, with a focus on densifying existing settlements, ensuring affordability, and effective infrastructure provision, including roads, waste services, and utilities, while service delivery gaps call for targeted interventions in underserved areas to ensure balanced and sustainable development.

3.3.2 Demographic Profile

3.3.2.1 Population group

Table 8: Population Group

Population Group	Counts	Percentages
Black African	568 002	98,7%
Coloured	714	0,1%
Indians/Asians	6 390	1,1%
Whites	473	0,1%
Others	188	0,0%

Source: StatsSA, 2022





Table shows that the TLM population is overwhelmingly Black African, making up 98.7% (568,002), whilst the minority groups include Indians or Asians at 1.1% (6,390), Mixed Race or Coloureds and Whites both at 0.1%, and Others at 0.0%. This reflects a highly homogeneous population in terms of racial composition.

Population Growth Estimates

Based on the population findings, TLM had a population of 450 931 in 2011 and based on census 2022, currently has a population of 575 929. Based on this, the annual growth rate is 2.23%. This figure serves as the foundational basis for developing future population projections within the region.

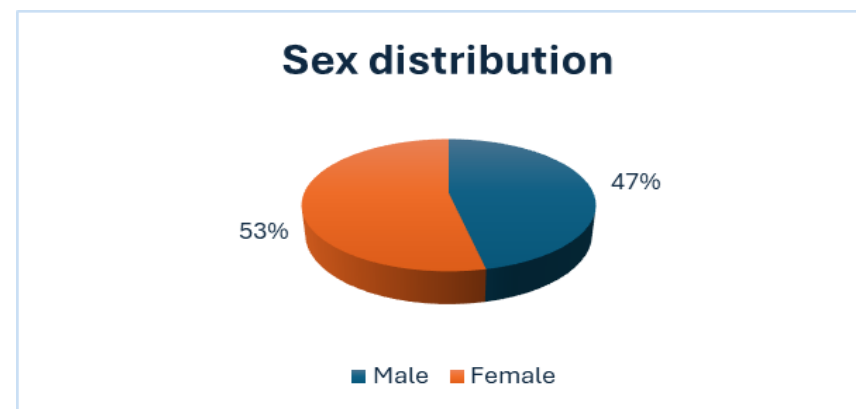
Table 9: TLM population projections

Year	Population
2022	575 929
2025	615,145
2030	685 119.

Source: Projections adopted based on Statistics South Africa Census 2011 and 2022

3.3.2.2 Sex distribution

Figure 8: Sex Distribution



Source: StatsSA, 2022

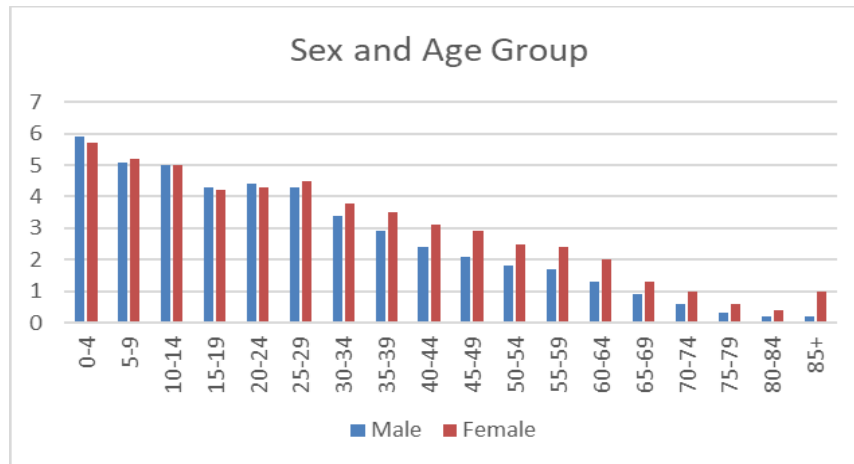
The sex distribution in the TLM is evenly distributed. There is over 53% of the female population and 47% of the male population. This shows an even distribution of sexes within the municipality.

3.3.2.3 Sex and Age Group

The sex and age distribution graph of TLM shows that the most dominant age group in both males and females is the youth of between the ages 0 to 34 years. This group amounts to over 40% of the total population. The elderly population of over 65 years in the municipality does not amount to more than 15% of the population. This means that including the middle age population, the municipality is currently dominated by working age population of 15 to 64 years.



Figure 9: Sex and Age Group

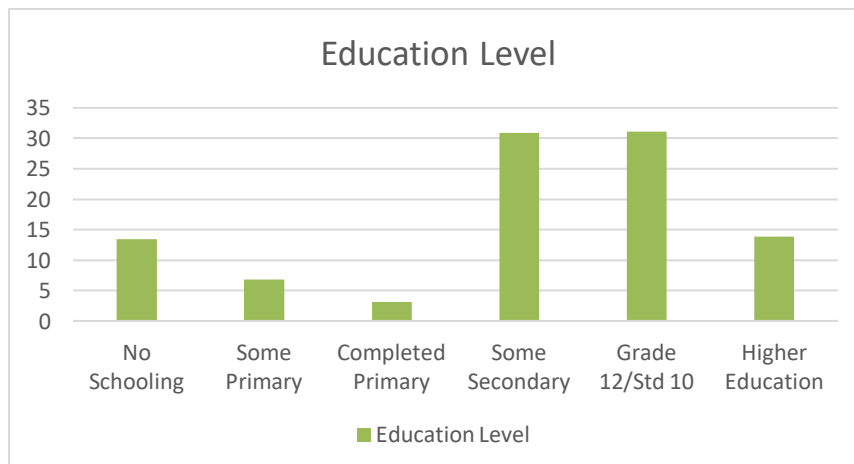


Source: StatsSA, 2022

3.3.3 Education Level

The figure below presents the various educational levels within the TLM.

Figure 10: Educational Level



Source: StatsSA, 2022

According to StatsSA, 2022 this clearly indicate that the education level of TLM consists of a fair total of about 30% and above however less than 35% has Grade 12 as well as some form of secondary education. Moreover, those with tertiary/higher education amounts to about 15% roughly, with about 10% with no schooling. Though some of them have completed primary education.

3.3.4 Number of Households and Trends

According to StatsSA 2022, the number of households in TLM has grown to 142,527, showing an increase of 25.02% of households since 2011, which had a total of 114,001 households recorded. This substantial growth reflects shifting demographics, urbanisation, and changing household structures. While it signals developmental momentum and potential for economic expansion, it also presents significant planning challenges related to infrastructure pressure, housing demand, and land use management. The TLM SDF must respond by spatially directing growth, identifying infrastructure priorities, and ensuring that future settlement development is well-located, serviceable, and sustainable.

3.3.5 Household Living Conditions

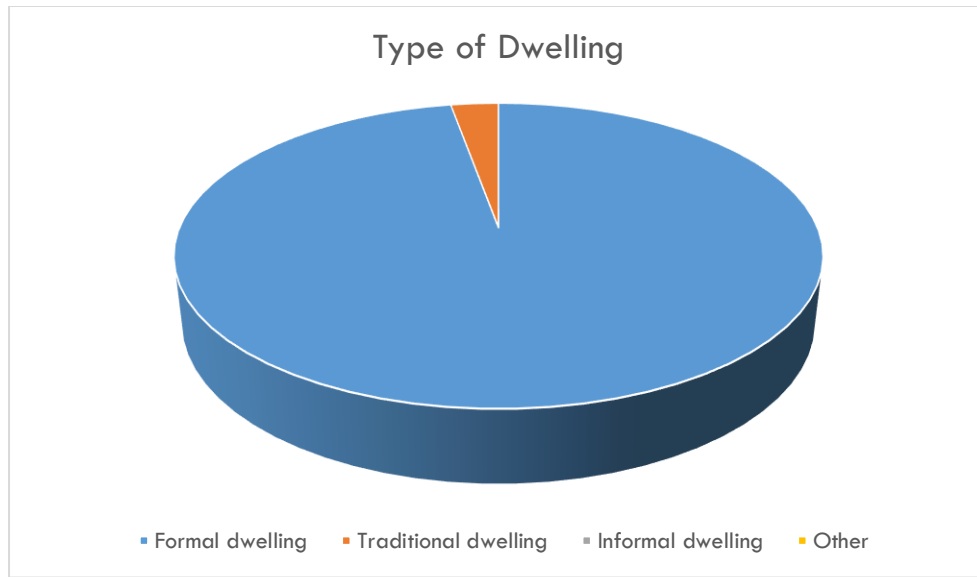
3.3.5.1 Types of dwellings

Figure 11 presents the various types of dwellings within the Thulamela Local Municipalities as per the Census 2022 information.





Figure 11: Types of dwelling



Source: StatsSA, 2022

Dwelling types can primarily be classified into formal, informal, and traditional dwellings.

Formal dwellings refer to a structure built according to approval plans, i.e, a house on a separate stand, a flat or apartment, a townhouse, a room in a backyard, or rooms or flatlets elsewhere.

Informal dwellings are makeshift structures not erected according to approved architectural plans, for example, shacks or shanties in backyards. In turn, traditional dwellings are huts or structures made of traditional materials such as clay.

According to Stats SA, 2022, 96.4% are formal dwellings while 2.8% are traditional dwellings of houses, informal dwelling 0.6% and other forms of dwelling types.

Table 10: Dwelling typology spread throughout the TLM

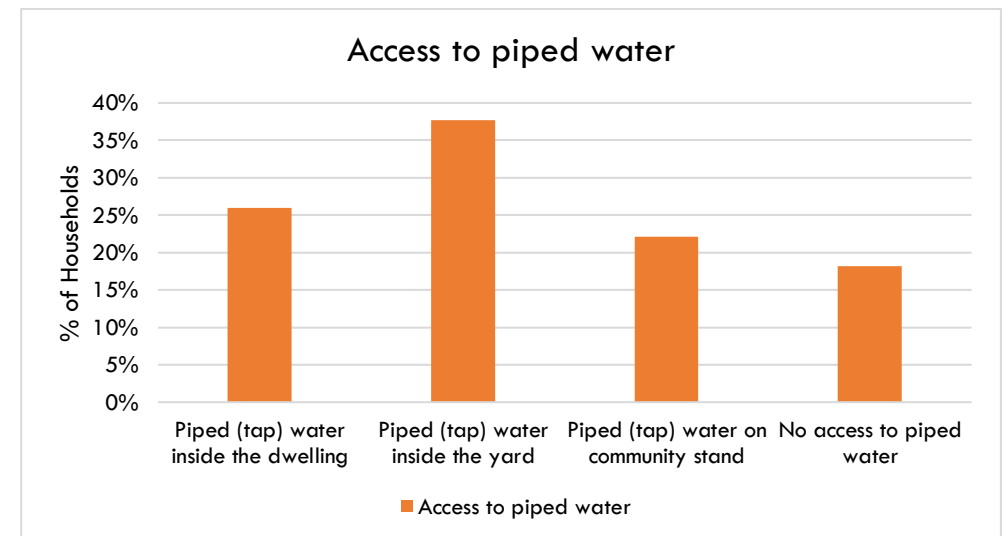
Name	Number of Dwellings	Percentage
Formal dwellings	137 427	96.4%
Traditional dwellings	3996	2.8%
Informal dwellings	793	0.6%
Other	312	0.2%

Source: Stats SA, 2022

3.3.5.2 Access to Piped water

The figure below presents the access to piped water within TLM.

Figure 12: Access to piped water





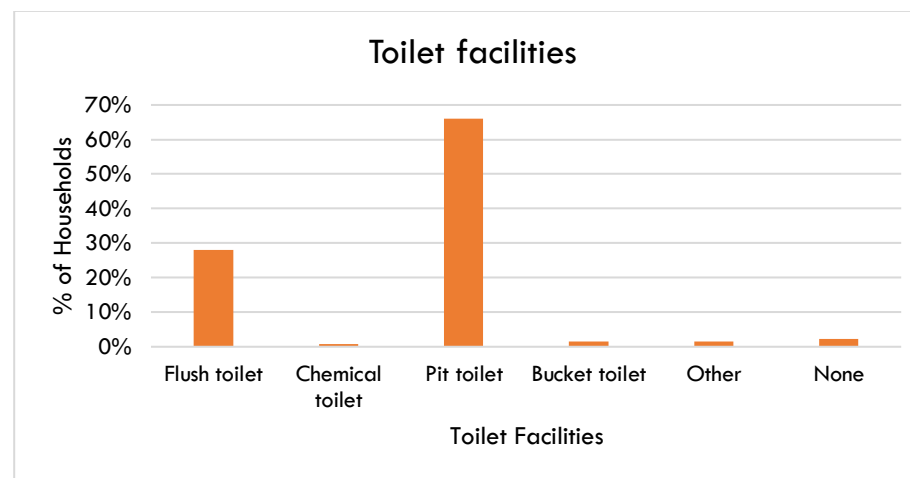
Source: StatsSA, 2022

According to the StasSA, 2022, it shows that in TLM, about 26% of households have piped water inside the dwelling, 33.7% have it in their yard, 22.1% rely on community standpipes, and 18.2% have no access at all. This means that just over one-quarter enjoy the convenience of indoor taps, while around one-third must fetch water from a tap in the yard. A substantial 22% still depend on communal sources implying queuing and travelling, while nearly 18% have no piped water and likely rely on less reliable alternatives like boreholes, weirs or streams. This distribution highlights significant infrastructural gaps, especially for those without water in their yards. Although a majority (81.8%) of households have some form of piped water access, access is often inconvenient, and 18% remain underserved, indicating a clear need for service improvements to ensure equitable and reliable water provision across TLM.

3.3.5.3 Access to Toilet Facilities

The figure below illustrates the distribution of toilet facility types across the TLM, as captured in the Census 2022 dataset. It reflects the proportion of households with access to various forms of sanitation, ranging from flush toilets connected to sewerage systems to pit latrines and other unimproved facilities.

Figure 13: Access to toilet facilities



Source: StatsSA, 2022

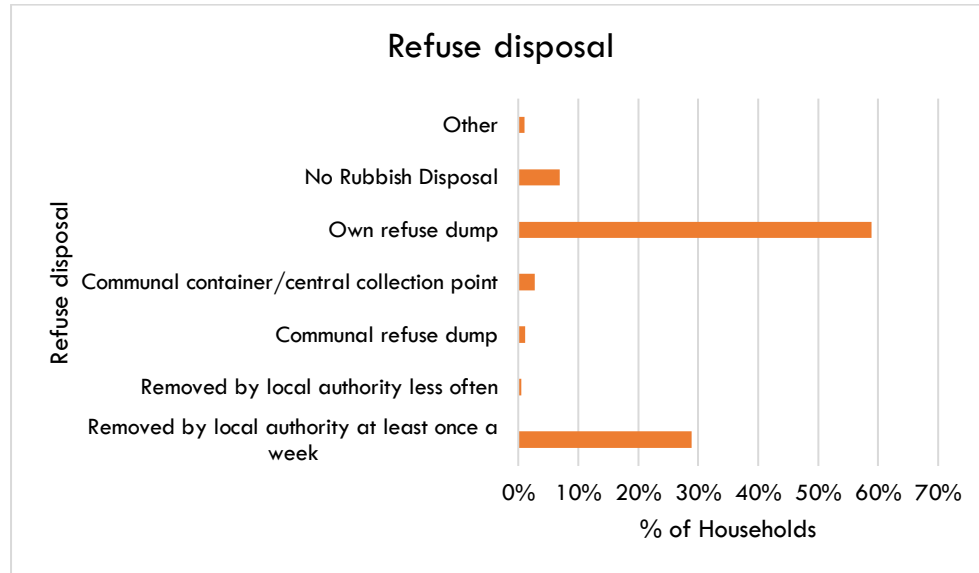
TLM primarily relies on pit toilets (66%), with a meaningful portion (28%) having flush toilets connected to a main line or septic tanks. However, about 4% use less adequate options (bucket, chemical, or none), indicating areas where sanitation improvement is needed. This data suggests ongoing challenges in sanitation infrastructure, typical of rural areas, with room for improved services to enhance health and living standards.





3.3.5.4 Refuse Disposal

Figure 14: Refuse Disposal



Source: StatsSA, 2022

The majority of households in TLM (58.9%) rely on their own refuse dumps, indicating a heavy dependence on informal and potentially unsafe waste disposal methods, particularly in rural areas. This informal method of disposal often involves open dumping or burying of waste on residential stands, practices which pose long-term environmental and public health risks, including groundwater contamination, pest infestation, and air pollution through burning.

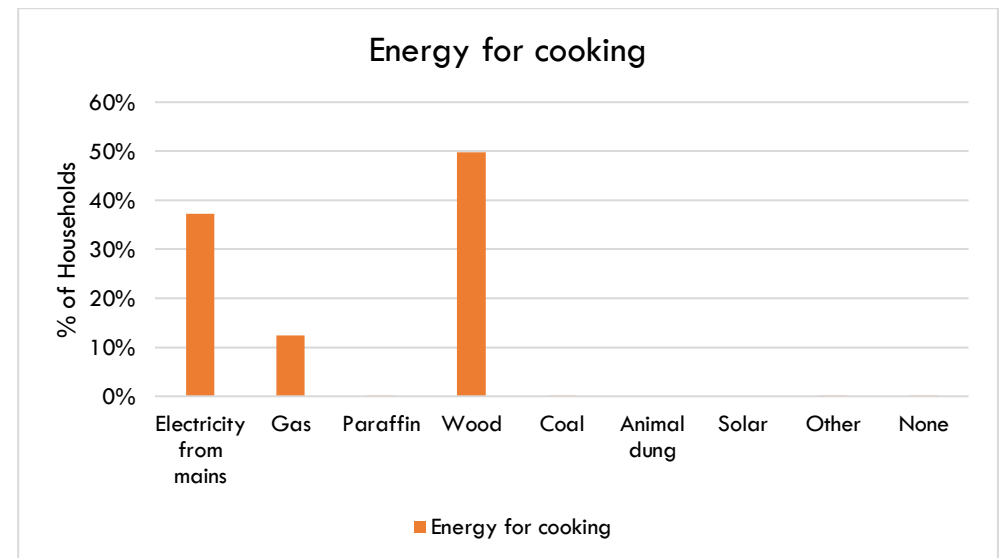
Only 0.5% of households receive weekly refuse removal from the TLM, with this service largely limited to urban areas such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa, and nearby townships. A small portion of households (2.7%) make use of communal

dumps or containers, while 6.9% have no access to any form of waste disposal service. This highlights major spatial inequalities in waste management infrastructure. The current pattern poses environmental and public health risks and reflects a need for expanded service coverage, targeted infrastructure investment in rural areas, and integrated waste planning aligned with nodal development priorities. Strategies such as decentralised waste stations, community-based recycling, and environmental awareness programmes should be considered to address the backlog and support sustainable waste management across the municipality.

3.3.6 Source of energy

3.3.6.1 Energy for cooking

Figure 15: Energy for cooking



Source: StatsSA, 2022

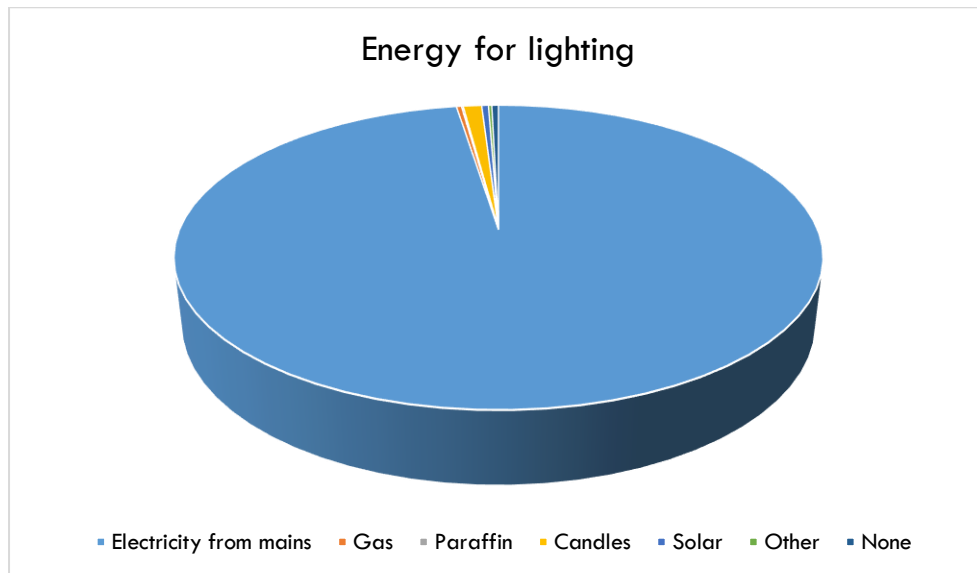




As indicated by the graph above, the majority of residents (49.8%) in TLM are using firewood as a result of the ever-increasing Eskom electricity tariffs. Followed by 37.3% using electricity from the main Eskom Grid, and about 12.4% are still using Gas. However, a small number of residents are still reliant on coal, paraffin and other sources, which then constitute 0.1%. Although many residents in TLM have incorporated Solar in their households, using it alternatively with Electricity from Eskom, hence the number of those using solar is relatively low.

3.3.6.2 Energy for lighting

Figure 16: Energy for lighting



Source: StatsSA, 2022

The figure above indicates that the whole municipality (97.7%) relies on Eskom for electricity, with a less number (1.1%) of residents still using candles then followed by solar (0.4%), and gas at (0.3%).

3.3.7 Social Facilities

An essential component of economic activity, as well as an indicator of living standards and poverty levels, is the availability of infrastructure and access to basic services. The availability of such services can also have a significant impact on how directly household welfare is improved. TLM is equipped with various social amenities, including healthcare, law enforcement, and educational facilities. In terms of education, the TLM has a total of 351 learning facilities. There are 47 healthcare facilities within the TLM, with clinics being the most prevalent. TLM is served by 2 district hospitals and TLM is also home to 5 police stations, with Thohoyandou Policing Area the largest in VDM.

Table 11: Social Amenities Provision Guidelines

FACILITY	ACCESS DISTANCE	POPULATION THRESHOLD
CRECHE	2 km radius	2400 – 3000 people
PRIMARY SCHOOL	5 – 10 km radius	1000 – 7000 people
SECONDARY SCHOOL	5 – 10 km radius	2500 – 12500 people
DISTRICT HOSPITAL	30 km radius	300 000 – 900 000 people





FACILITY	ACCESS DISTANCE	POPULATION THRESHOLD
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE	5 km radius	60 000 – 140 000 people
PRIMARY HEALTH CLINIC	5 km radius	5000 – 70 000 people
POLICE STATION	8 km radius	60 000 – 100 000 people
LIBRARY	8 – 10 km radius (local)	5000 – 70 000 people
	15 km radius (regional)	200 000 people
	50 km radius (regional reference)	450 000 people
COMMUNITY HALL	10 – 25 km radius	10 000 – 60 000 people
CEMETERY	15 – 30 km radius (medium)	8.8 ha/50 000 people
	30 km radius (large)	17.2 ha/100 000 people
THUSONG CENTRE	15 – 25 km radius	1 per LM
ICT ACCESS POINTS	5 km radius	10 000+ people

Source: CSIR Guidelines for the Provision of Social Facilities in South African Settlements 2012

TLM generally meets the guidelines for primary schools, secondary schools, clinics, community health centres, district hospitals, and police stations, but there are notable gaps in other Wards. Primary Schools are adequately distributed across the municipality and challenges include other accessibility

issues as well as those schools which are currently not operational and are now closed. Similarly, secondary schools are well-provided in throughout TLM.

In terms of community health centres, and district hospitals, TLM overall residents have direct access to free and specialised medical care, and in contrast, TLM is better served with district hospitals and community health centres. Clinics are generally sufficient, throughout TLM only 4 clinics may have challenges in ensuring that the population is within the 5 km radius requirement.

Police stations, Courts and Correctional Services are relatively well-distributed within the local municipality.

In summary, TLM needs more infrastructure refurbishments, especially in healthcare and law enforcements in order to meet the CSIR social facilities guidelines.

3.3.7.1 Schools

There are 239 primary schools, 96 secondary schools, 13 combined schools and 3 Special Needs Education. Some of the schools are currently inoperative due to various reasons.

3.3.7.2 Healthcare Facilities

TLM has a variety of healthcare facilities that include 2 district/regional hospitals (Tshilidzini and Donald Fraser Hospitals), 4 Community Health Centres and about 39 Clinics, and 1 Hayani Psychiatric Hospital.

These facilities are mainly concentrated and spread throughout the municipality.





3.3.7.3 Library

According to TLM SDF 2019 – 2023, it is reflected that TLM has five library facilities serving about 207110 learners.

The Thohoyandou library is the largest with an estimated daily attendance of about 500 people. There is however a shortage of reference books for specialized disciplines (e.g., nursing and engineering). Other libraries include the Makwerela Library, Maniini Modular Library, Mutale Public Library, and the Tshiluvhi Modular Library.

3.3.7.4 Police Station/Courts/Correctional Services

TLM justice infrastructure is anchored in a wide range network of police stations, correctional services facility, and courts that service both primary urban areas and rural settlements. These institutions form a spatial backbone supporting public order, legal access, and community resilience across the municipal footprint.

3.3.7.4.1 Police Station

The current TLM IDP Review 2024/25-2026/27, highlights that, VDM is divided into Thohoyandou and Makhado Justice Cluster. Makhado cluster is comprised of 06 police stations: Mphepu, Tshilwavhusiku, Watervaal, Mara, Tshaulu and Siloam. Thohoyandou cluster is comprised of 7 police stations namely Thohoyandou, Levubu, Mutale, Makuya, Tshaulu, Siloam and Vuwani policing area.

TLM has a total of 5 Police Stations, these include Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshaulu, Ha-Makuya and Mutale policing area (Refer to map 18). Furthermore, a new police station is currently under development in Khubvi, which is expected to enhance law enforcement capacity and improve public safety in the area.

3.3.7.4.2 Courts

The courts are a critical component of exercising democracy, as the current TLM IDP Review 2024/25-2026/27 highlighted, there is 01 High Court: Thohoyandou, with 10 district courts: Musina, Louis Trichardt, Dzanani, Hlanganani, Thohoyandou, Vuwani, Tshilwavhusiku, Waterval & Mutale, as well as 03 Regional Courts: Sibasa, Louis Trichardt and Dzanani, and 4 Periodical Courts: Makuya, Tshaulu, Levubu, together with 43 Traditional Courts under Traditional Authorities in VDM.

In TLM there is Thohoyandou High Court, Sibasa Regional Court, Thohoyandou and Mutale District Court together with Periodical Courts in Tshaulu and Makuya.

3.3.7.4.3 Correctional Services

TLM has one of the best correctional centre/facilities in South Africa serving the entire VDM and is commonly known as Matatshe Prison and currently known as Matatshe Medium B Correctional Facility/Centre, located in Ngudza or Vondwe just outside Thohoyandou.





1.3.7.5 Cemetery

TLM has 3 municipal cemeteries, located in Shayandima, Tshilamba and Thohoyandou (Mbaleni).

In rural areas, cemeteries are often managed at a community level rather than directly by the municipality. Such burial sites are typically located on communal land and are administered by traditional leaders or community committees. Management practices are guided by cultural customs and local protocols, but they must also comply with the provisions of the National Health Act, 2003 (Act No. 61 of 2003) because burials, if not managed properly, can pose environmental and health risks. Section 90 (4) empowers the Minister of Health to make regulations and take measures for the prevention of public health hazards, environmental protection, and the safe handling of human remains. While these regulations allow for traditional burial practices, they also require that rural cemeteries be sited and managed in a way that prevents groundwater contamination, controls disease risk, and ensures dignified burial conditions.

TLM grades or re-gravels cemetery roads as and when required for burial purposes in rural settlements. According to page 563 and 564 of the TLM IDP Review, 2024/25-2026/27, Mbaleni and Shayandima cemeteries had an objective of constructing screen wall fence by June 2025, Mbaleni Screen Wall Fence is already completed.

3.3.7.6 Sports, Arts and Culture facilities in TLM.

The distribution of sporting facilities within the municipality is mainly urban biased and the sparsely populated rural villages experience a shortage of these amenities. Indigenous sports, arts and culture events that take place under the banner of social cohesion. Annual indigenous arts and cultural competitions including Khadi, Mufuvha, Muravhava, Nnode and Duvheke take place at Tshikona, Malende and Zwigombela including auditions for talents identification. The table below shows the recreational facilities in municipality.

Table 12: Recreational facilities within TLM

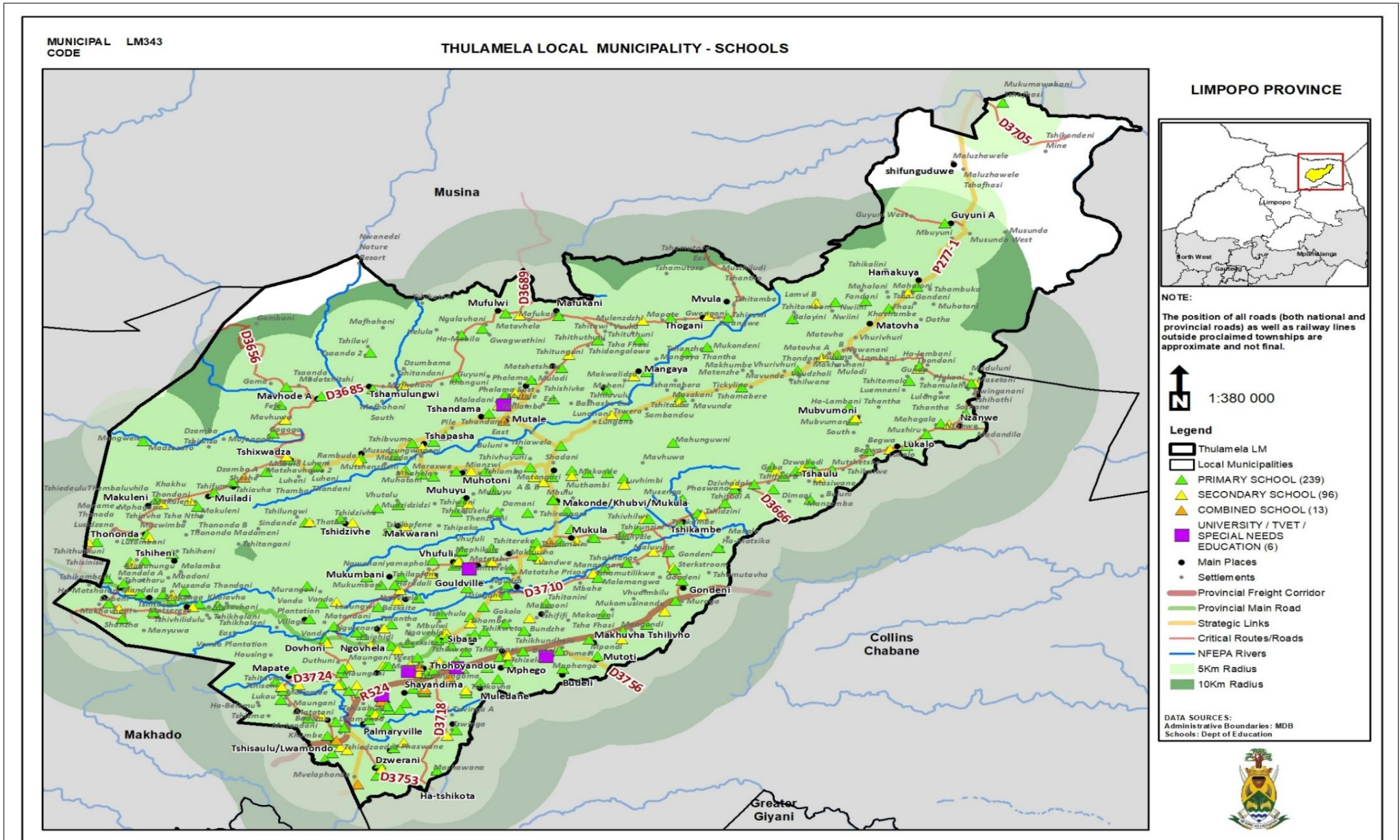
Sport facility	Location	Number
Multipurpose Sport Courts	Makwarela (Dilapidated), Thohoyandou	2
Indoor Center	Thohoyandou	1
Multipurpose Stadiums	Makwarela, Tshifulanani, Tshikombani, Tshifudi, Makhuvha,	5
Stadiums	Thohoyandou, Makwarela, Tshifulanani, Tshikombani, Tshifudi, Makhuvha, Makonde	7
Multipurpose Sport and Recreation Hall	Thohoyandou indoor sports centre	1
Community hall	Makwarela, Thohoyandou, Tshilamba	3
Arts and culture centre	Thohoyandou	1
Recreational parks	Thohoyandou Block G Park, River side, Miluwani	3
Total		23

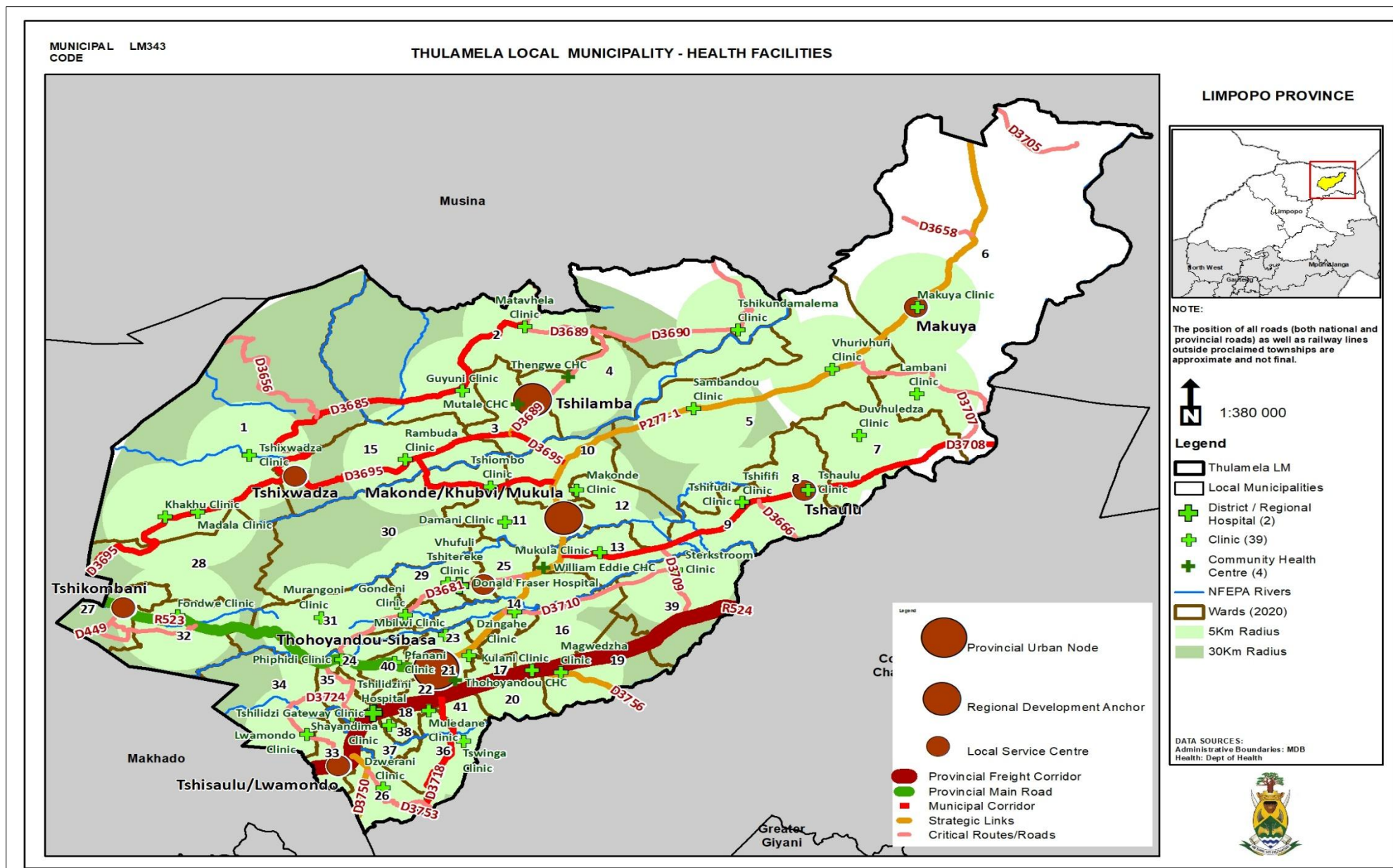
Source: TLM SDF 2019/2023





Map 18: Schools

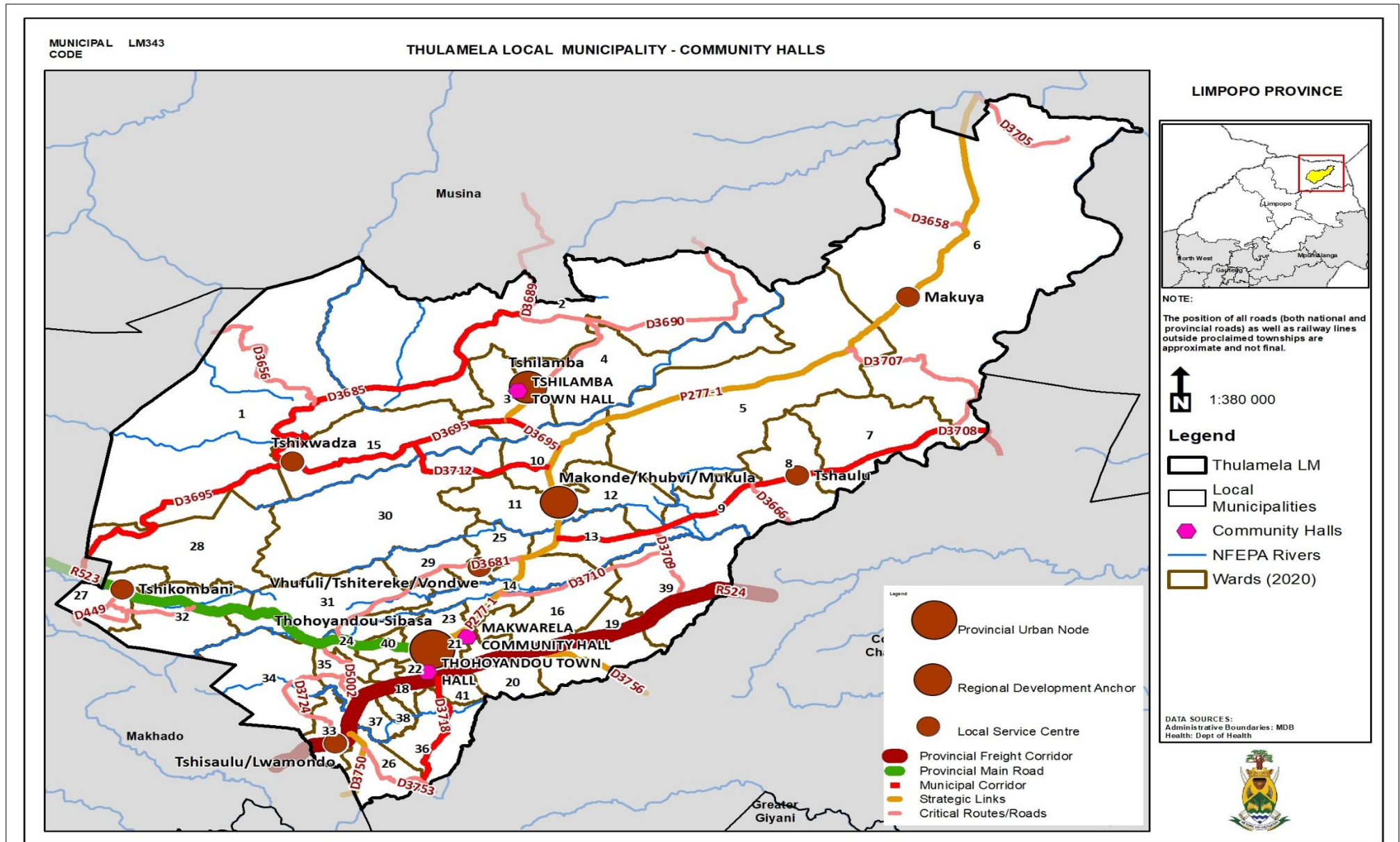








Map 21: Community Halls





3.3.8 Economic Sectors

This section provides an overview of the Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) economy within the broader context of the Limpopo provincial economy, supported by an indication of the relative size and structure of the local economy. Historically, Limpopo Province has recorded generally positive economic growth trends. However, economic performance was adversely affected during periods of global and national shocks, most notably in 2009 due to the global financial crisis, and again between 2019 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These events negatively impacted economic growth at provincial, district, and local levels, including Limpopo Province, Vhembe District Municipality (VDM), and TLM.

In terms of the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2025, TLM forms part of the Eastern Region, which is characterised by a number of strategic spatial focus areas with direct relevance to the municipality. Key spatial focus areas applicable to TLM include the following:

Industrial and Logistics Focus Areas:

The Shayandima Industrial Area within TLM aligns with this spatial focus, serving as a key industrial and logistics node despite current challenges related to investment and industrial decline.

Environment and Tourism Focus Areas:

TLM contains extensive protected and environmentally sensitive areas and has a strong tourism base extending across land under Tshivhase

Traditional Authority, Makuya Traditional Authority, Mphaphuli Traditional Authority, and surrounding areas. These assets position the municipality as a significant contributor to eco-tourism and heritage tourism within the Eastern Region.

Agriculture and Farming Focus Areas:

A substantial portion of Limpopo's high-potential agricultural land, as well as areas supporting small-scale and subsistence farming, is located within TLM. Strategic Water Source Areas and several irrigation schemes within the municipality further strengthen its agricultural role within the Eastern Region, as identified in the LSDF (2025).

Mining Focus Areas:

Mining activity within TLM is largely limited to sand mining. While this contributes to the local construction economy, it also presents environmental and regulatory challenges, necessitating coordinated intervention by relevant provincial and national departments responsible for mining regulation and permitting.

Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition Focus Areas:

TLM includes areas of dense and growing human settlements that require targeted investment in nodal strengthening, spatial connectivity, and basic service provision to improve quality of life, enhance access to economic opportunities, and curb urban sprawl.





Significant portions of the municipality also fall within the Eastern Escarpment Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition Region, as identified in the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), 2022. The LSDF (2025) reinforces this designation and highlights its relevance to TLM.

The Thulamela Local Economic Development (LED) Strategy, 2021 identifies the municipality's economic base as being driven by six key sectors, namely agriculture, tourism, wholesale and retail trade, industry, government services, and small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs). These sectors collectively underpin employment, income generation, and economic resilience within the municipality.

3.3.8.1 Agriculture

The agriculture sector in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) encompasses a wide range of activities, including crop cultivation, horticulture, livestock farming, forestry and logging, and related agricultural services. Sub-sectors also include commercial hunting, game propagation, and fishing. Agriculture remains a critical economic driver for TLM, providing livelihoods, supporting food security, and contributing to the local and regional economy.

According to the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025), TLM is situated within the Eastern Region, characterised by a diverse agricultural landscape that includes high-production commercial irrigation schemes, game reserves, and subsistence farming areas. The Eastern Region is recognised as South Africa's tropical and subtropical fruit basket, underscoring the municipality's strategic role in provincial agricultural production. The TLM Local

Economic Development (LED) Strategy, 2021 and TLM SDF 2019–2023 identify agriculture as a key sector for stimulating economic growth, creating employment, and transforming the local economy. The municipality's climate, soil capability, water resources, and landscape suitability support a wide variety of agricultural activities, including cash crops, horticulture, livestock, and smallholder farming.

Key Agricultural Activities in TLM

- **Tea Plantations:** Black tea plantations previously occupied 1,077 hectares under Tshivhase Traditional Authority. Although no longer operational, the LSDF (2025) identifies the revitalisation of the Tshivhase Tea Estate as a strategic initiative for agricultural diversification.
- **Commercial Fruit Production:** Along the Mutale River and Mbwedi Dam, Tshivhase Agridam (Pty) specialises in tropical and subtropical fruit production, supporting both the local and provincial supply chains.
- **Smallholder Irrigation Schemes:**
 - **Tshiombo Smallholder Irrigation Scheme** – located approximately 40 km north of Thohoyandou, covering 1,195 hectares and divided into 930 plots, where farmers cultivate an average of 1.29 ha each (Mudzielwana, Mafongoya & Mudhara, 2022).





- Other smallholder irrigation schemes (operational or non-operational) include Dopeni, Dzindi, Dzwerani, Khumbe, Malavumwe, Matsika, Murara, Palmaryville (Gondeni), Phaswana, Rambuda, and Tshaulu.
- Phaswana Irrigation Scheme (Tshaulu): Located along the Luvuvhu River, specialising in mango production and other subtropical crops.
- Technical Support and Knowledge Transfer: Higher education institutions such as Madzivhandila College of Agriculture and University of Venda (Univen) provide technical guidance, training, and research support to local farmers, promoting best practices and sustainable agricultural management.
- Agricultural Gateway Role: Thohoyandou serves as an agricultural gateway, supporting the distribution of tropical and subtropical products, commercial crops, and small-scale farming operations predominantly located within Traditional Authority areas (LSDF, 2025).

The management and promotion of agriculture in TLM are supported by a comprehensive policy and legislative framework:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), Section 24, mandates sustainable land use and environmental protection, ensuring agricultural practices do not compromise ecological integrity.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998, requires land-use planning to account for soil, water, and biodiversity impacts.

- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA), 2004, supports the conservation of ecosystems linked to agricultural landscapes.
- Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act (1996) and Restitution of Land Rights Act (1994), provide frameworks for equitable access to agricultural land.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, emphasises agriculture as a vehicle for rural development, job creation, and economic transformation.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2, 8, 12, 15), promote food security, sustainable agriculture, value addition, and protection of terrestrial ecosystems.
- NSDF (2022), identifies agricultural potential, irrigation schemes, and strategic water source areas as key spatial informants for economic development and settlement planning.
- LSDF (2025) & LDP (2025), prioritise the protection of high-potential agricultural land, sustainable irrigation practices, and the integration of agriculture with tourism, forestry, and industrial development in the Eastern Region.



Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Land-Use Planning and Protection: High-potential agricultural areas, irrigation schemes, and fertile river valleys should be prioritised for agricultural use and protected from urban encroachment, particularly in high-production areas such as the Luvuvhu Valley.





- **Agricultural Revitalisation:** Revitalisation of key agricultural estates, such as the Tshivhase Tea Estate, presents opportunities for economic diversification, agro-processing, and employment creation.
- **Support for Smallholder Farmers:** Operational and non-operational smallholder irrigation schemes require technical support, access to markets, and investment to optimise productivity and ensure sustainability.
- **Integration with Education and Research:** Strengthening partnerships with Madzivhandila College of Agriculture and Univen can enhance technology transfer, climate-smart agriculture, and sustainable land management practices.
- **Alignment with Provincial and National Plans:** Integrating agricultural planning with the LSDF (2025), NSDF (2022), and LDP (2025) ensures coordinated development, protection of strategic water source areas, and alignment with South Africa's economic transformation goals outlined in the NDP 2030.
- **Agro-Economic Development Opportunities:** TLM's agricultural base can be leveraged to expand agro-processing, tourism-linked agriculture, and value-chain development, supporting economic resilience and rural livelihoods.

3.3.8.2 Tourism

- **Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM)** possesses a distinctive tourism profile with significant potential for economic growth, revenue generation, and job creation, as highlighted in the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025). The municipality's natural,

cultural, and heritage assets provide a strong foundation for tourism development, including sacred and ecological sites such as Lake Fundudzi, the Thathe Vondo Forest, and the Tshatshingo Potholes, which hold both ecological and cultural significance.

While these individual attractions contribute to the municipality's tourism appeal, they are insufficient alone to establish TLM as a standalone tourist destination. However, through strategic development, integration of attractions, and leveraging inter-municipal collaborations, the municipality can unlock its full tourism potential and strengthen its position within the Vhembe District Municipality (VDM) and the Eastern Region of Limpopo.

➤ Key Tourism Assets in TLM

- **Natural and Ecological Sites:** Waterfalls (Phiphidi, Tshirovha, Khalavha, Pile), Thathe Vondo Forest, Lake Fundudzi, Tshatshingo Potholes, Mphaphuli Cycad Reserve, Mutale Gorge.
- **Dams and Water-Based Attractions:** Nandoni, Duludzivha, Mbuwe, and other dams providing scenic and recreational opportunities.
- **Cultural and Heritage Sites:** Tshavhadinda Cave, Mukumbani Tea Estate, Makuya Park, Picnic sites (Mutavhatsindi, Golwe), Musununu Tree, Thohoyandou Botanical Gardens (part of SANBI).
- **Regional Attractions within VDM:** Mutale River Gorge, Mutale Potholes, African Ivory Route Camp, Mutale Falls, Matshakatini, Makuya Park, Mutale Craft Centre, Mianzwi Archaeological site and ruins. These assets highlight the potential for coordinated tourism circuits across municipal boundaries to enhance VDM as a standalone tourism destination.





The sustainable development and management of tourism and natural assets in TLM is guided by national and provincial legislation and policy:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24), guarantees the right to a healthy environment and protection of cultural and natural heritage.
- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, 1998), requires environmental considerations, including biodiversity and ecological integrity, in planning and development.
- National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (NEMBA, 2004), promotes the conservation of ecosystems and protection of threatened species.
- National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA, 1999), governs the protection and management of heritage and cultural sites.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, recognises tourism as a key sector for economic growth, job creation, and rural development.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8, 12, 15), support sustainable tourism, local economic growth, and the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems.
- NSDF (2022), identifies strategic tourism corridors and nodes, emphasising inter-municipal collaboration and regional tourism development.
- LSDF (2025) & LDP (2025), highlight TLM's role within the Eastern Region as part of a tourism cluster, stressing the development of eco-tourism, cultural heritage, and integrated tourism circuits across municipalities.



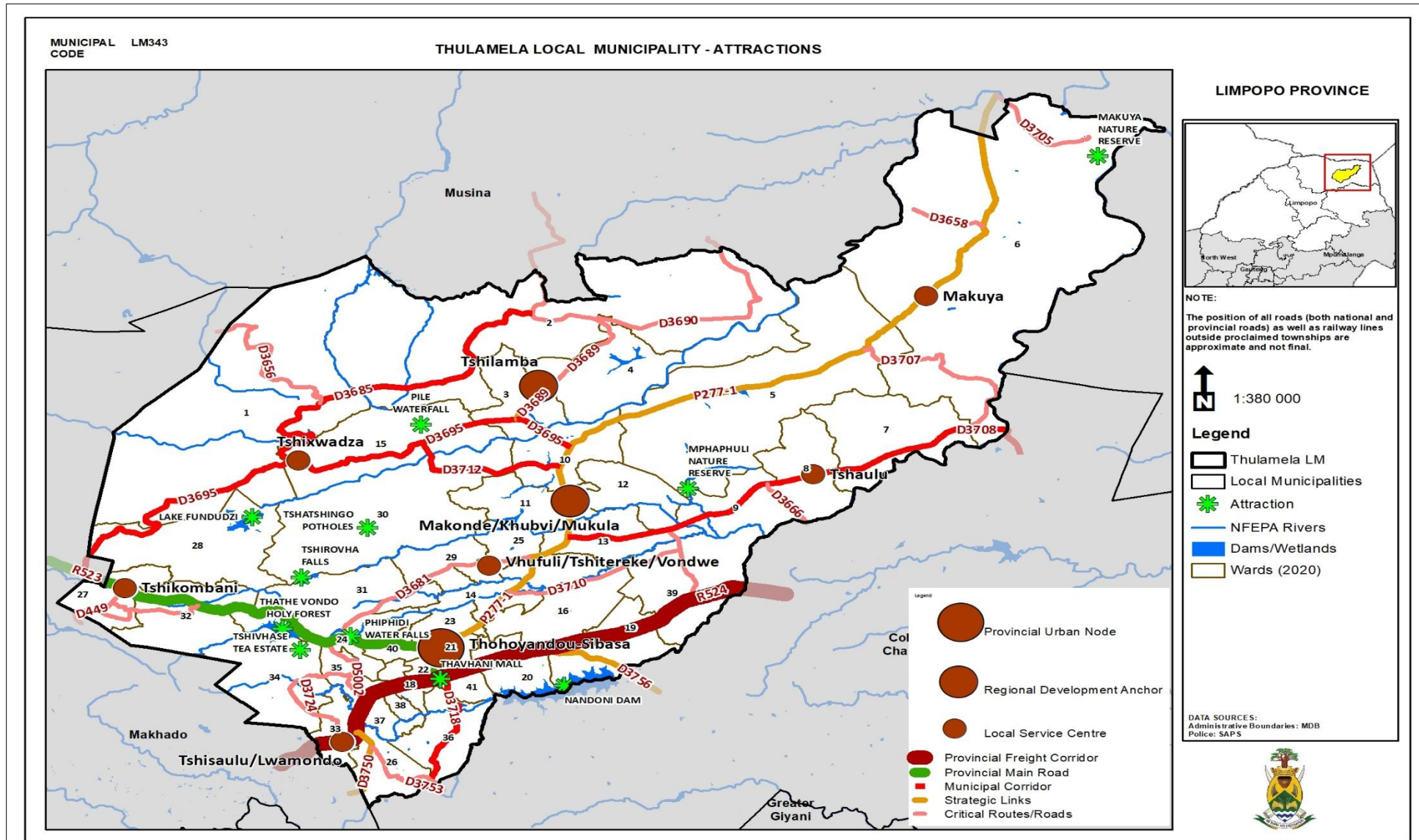
Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Integrated Tourism Planning: There is a need to develop integrated tourism circuits linking natural, cultural, and heritage attractions within TLM and across neighbouring municipalities in VDM to enhance the region's competitiveness.
- Environmental and Cultural Protection: Development of tourism infrastructure must be balanced with the protection of sensitive ecosystems (e.g., forests, sacred lakes) and heritage sites to maintain ecological and cultural integrity.
- Economic Development Opportunities: Tourism offers potential for job creation, small business development (e.g., craft markets, eco-tourism services), and promotion of local economic growth.
- Inter-Municipal Collaboration: Strategic partnerships with neighbouring municipalities are essential to promote regional tourism, coordinate marketing efforts, and leverage shared infrastructure.
- Investment in Infrastructure: Supporting access roads, visitor facilities, and signage while maintaining environmental standards is crucial to attract and retain tourists.
- Policy Alignment: Tourism development should be consistent with the LSDF (2025), NSDF (2022), LDP (2025), and the NDP 2030, ensuring sustainable growth, protection of natural assets, and equitable economic benefits to local communities.



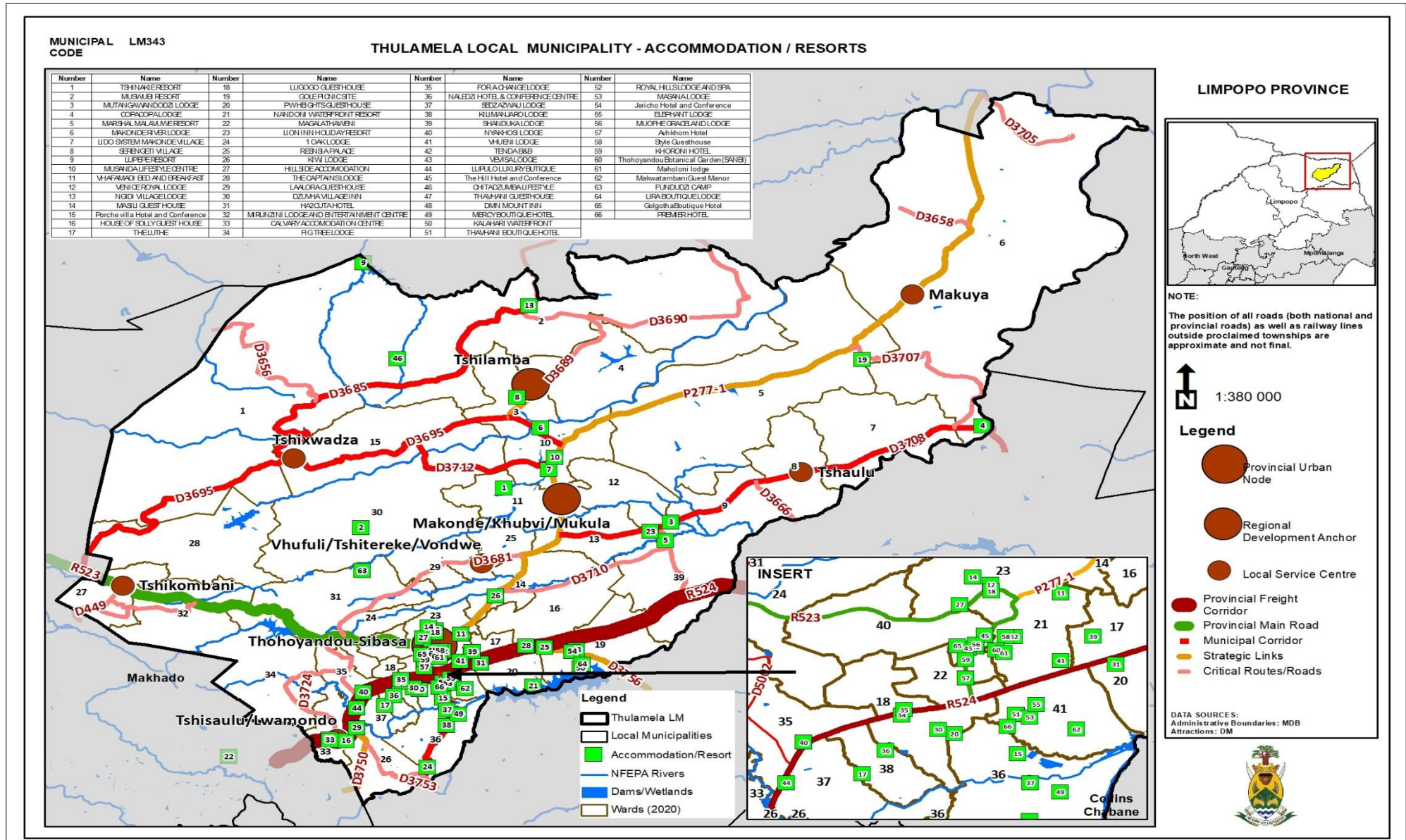


Map 22: Tourism Attractions

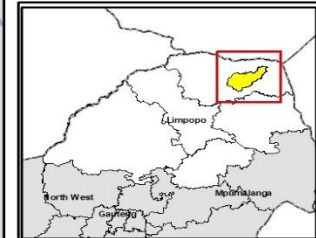




Map 23: Tourism Accommodations/Resorts



LIMPOPO PROVINCE



NOTE:
The position of all roads (both national and provincial roads) as well as railway lines outside proclaimed townships are approximate and not final.

Legend
1:380 000

- Provincial Urban Node
- Regional Development Anchor
- Local Service Centre
- Provincial Freight Corridor
- Provincial Main Road
- Municipal Corridor
- Strategic Links
- Critical Routes/Roads

DATA SOURCES:
Administrative Boundaries: MDB
Attractions: DM





3.3.8.3 Wholesale, Retail and Trade

The Wholesale, Retail, and Trade sector is a key contributor to the economy of Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), encompassing both formal and informal commercial activities. This sector supports employment, income generation, and local economic circulation, making it one of the main drivers of the municipality's local economy.

The informal sector is particularly prominent in the Central Business Districts (CBDs) and designated Business Areas (BAs) around major nodal points, including Thohoyandou and Sibasa. While the informal economy provides livelihoods and entrepreneurial opportunities, it also presents challenges such as unregulated land use, congestion, inadequate infrastructure, and pressures on services and municipal planning systems. These challenges underscore the need for structured support, spatial management, and integration into broader economic planning frameworks.

The management and development of the wholesale, retail, and trade sector in TLM is guided by national and provincial policies, including:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Sections 24 & 25), protects the right to property while promoting equitable access to economic opportunities and sustainable urban development.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, emphasises the growth of SMMEs, the informal sector, and trade to stimulate local economic development and job creation.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8 and 11), promote sustained economic growth, decent work, inclusive urban development, and sustainable cities.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022), encourages the integration of formal and informal commercial activities into nodal development, supporting functional urban economies and spatial transformation.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) & Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025), highlight the role of Thohoyandou and Sibasa as regional service and trade hubs, emphasizing investment in infrastructure, market facilities, and formalisation of informal trading spaces.
- Municipal SDF and LED Strategies (TLM SDF 2019–2023; LED Strategy 2021), call for improved regulation, support, and spatial planning of CBDs and business nodes to enhance functionality, accessibility, and local economic growth.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Spatial Planning and Management: CBDs and business nodes should be planned to integrate informal traders with formal commerce, providing dedicated trading spaces, pedestrian-friendly layouts, and adequate service infrastructure.
- Economic Development Support: Programs to support small businesses and informal traders, such as access to finance, training,





and business development services, can enhance sector productivity and resilience.

- Infrastructure Investment: Upgrading markets, transport linkages, storage facilities, and waste management systems will improve efficiency, attract investment, and reduce urban congestion.
- Regulatory Compliance and Formalisation: Clear zoning and regulatory measures can balance informal and formal economic activity while protecting the rights of traders and consumers.
- Alignment with Provincial and National Strategies: Integrating wholesale, retail, and trade sector development with LSDF (2025), LDP (2025), NSDF (2022), and NDP 2030 ensures that TLM contributes to provincial growth, equitable urban development, and economic inclusion.

3.3.8.4. Industry

Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) hosts one major industrial area, the Shayandima Industrial Area, complemented by several light and heavy industrial hubs located within key nodal points and Strategic Development Areas (SDAs), including Sibasa/Makwarela, Ha-Makhuvha, Tshilivho, Vhufuli, and Tshilamba. These industrial nodes form part of the Industrial and Logistics spatial focus areas as identified in the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025), highlighting their strategic importance in supporting local economic activity, employment, and regional service provision.

Currently, these hubs provide goods and services to local communities and serve as important economic support nodes within TLM. However, industrial

activity within the municipality is largely experiencing low growth, and the Shayandima Industrial Area in particular shows signs of decline, due in part to limited investment, reduced business incentives, and constraints in infrastructure and market access.

The development and management of the industrial sector in TLM is guided by multiple legislative and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Sections 24 & 25), ensures the sustainable use of land while supporting equitable economic opportunities.
- National Development Plan (NDP 2030), emphasises the role of industrial development in economic growth, job creation, and the diversification of local economies.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8, 9, and 11), promote inclusive economic growth, resilient infrastructure, sustainable industrialization, and sustainable cities and communities.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022), identifies industrial and logistics nodes as strategic areas to support economic transformation, regional connectivity, and urban-rural integration.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) & Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025), highlight the strategic importance of Shayandima and other industrial hubs as key drivers for regional industrial and logistics development, and recommend interventions to





stimulate investment, modernize infrastructure, and enhance sector growth.

- TLM SDF and LED Strategy (2019–2023; 2021), call for targeted support to revitalize declining industrial areas, improve infrastructure, and strengthen the alignment of industrial development with regional economic priorities.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Revitalisation of Declining Industrial Areas: Targeted investment and incentives are required to reverse the decline of the Shayandima Industrial Area, including infrastructure upgrades, business retention programs, and support for light and medium manufacturing.
- Industrial Spatial Planning: Industrial hubs should be integrated within municipal spatial planning frameworks to ensure accessibility, connectivity to logistics networks, and compliance with environmental and land-use regulations.
- Economic Diversification and Growth: Encouraging the establishment of new industrial enterprises, including agro-processing, small and medium-scale manufacturing, and logistics services, can diversify the local economy and create employment opportunities.
- Alignment with Provincial and National Plans: Industrial development initiatives should align with LSDF (2025), LDP (2025), NSDF (2022), and NDP 2030, ensuring that TLM contributes to regional economic

transformation, sustainable industrialization, and local economic resilience.

- Environmental and Vegetation Considerations: Industrial expansion must account for the protection of sensitive vegetation areas, ecological corridors, and strategic water source areas, in compliance with NEMA (1998), NEMBA (2004), and SDG 15, to avoid environmental degradation while supporting economic growth.

3.3.8.5 Government Services

Thohoyandou plays a critical role as an administrative and service gateway within a densely populated settlement area in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), hosting a substantial tertiary economic sector alongside government and social services, as highlighted in the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025). The government services sector is not traditionally classified as a production sector; its primary direct contribution to the local economy comes from salaries paid to government employees.

In TLM, these salaries represent a significant portion of local disposable income, which sustains other key sectors, particularly the wholesale, retail, and trade sector, and indirectly supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) and informal businesses. The presence of government institutions, parastatals, and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in Thohoyandou as a provincial urban node and regional development anchor as well as Sibasa to spire to be part of the regional development anchor that provides critical economic stability, enabling the functioning of local markets and service provision. Without this institutional presence, the local wholesale, retail, and





trade sector would be considerably smaller, underscoring the interdependence of government services and private economic activity in TLM. The management, support, and development of government services in TLM is informed by multiple legislative and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Sections 24, 195 & 227), guarantees the right to efficient public administration, equitable access to services, and sustainable human settlements.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, identifies government services as an anchor for local economic development, highlighting the role of urban nodes in generating economic spillovers through salaries, procurement, and service delivery.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8, 9, and 11), promote inclusive economic growth, decent work, resilient infrastructure, and sustainable cities.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022), emphasises the role of administrative and service hubs as anchors for spatial transformation, economic inclusion, and human settlement planning.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) & Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025), designate Thohoyandou as a provincial urban node and Sibasa as a regional development anchor, highlighting the importance of government presence in supporting local economies and service provision.
- TLM SDF (2019–2023) & LED Strategy (2021), advocate for strengthening institutional capacity, aligning urban growth with service

delivery, and leveraging government services to stimulate local economic sectors.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Economic Stability: Government salaries provide an essential income base that underpins consumption, sustains local businesses, and supports the informal sector.
- Urban Node Consolidation: Thohoyandou's role as an administrative and service gateway must be consolidated, including infrastructure investment, improved public service delivery, and planning for higher-density settlement areas.
- Private Sector Enablement: Government institutions act as economic anchors, attracting complementary private sector investment, commercial services, and SMME activity.
- Spatial Planning Alignment: The presence of government services must be integrated into the TLM SDF and local economic planning to ensure that urban growth, infrastructure provision, and land-use planning are coordinated and sustainable.
- Linkages with Provincial and National Strategies: Aligning government service delivery and urban node development with the NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), LDP (2025), and NDP 2030 supports equitable economic development, spatial transformation, and regional competitiveness.

3.3.8.6 Small Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs)

Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play a critical role in the local economy, serving as key drivers of economic growth, innovation, and job





creation within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). This sector is highly dependent on other economic sectors, particularly government services, wholesale and retail trade, tourism, agriculture, and industrial activity. The absence of a thriving private sector in the municipality constrains SMME development, as many enterprises rely heavily on government procurement, grants, and support programs to sustain operations.

Currently, the SMME sector in TLM is growing, but faces significant challenges in terms of long-term sustainability, with few enterprises surviving beyond ten years without facing operational, financial, or market-related difficulties. These challenges highlight the need for structured support, capacity building, and integration into broader local economic development strategies.

The development and support of SMMEs in TLM is guided by a combination of national, provincial, and municipal policies:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Sections 24 & 27), supports the right to economic participation and sustainable livelihoods, which underpins the establishment and growth of small businesses.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, emphasises the role of SMMEs as engines for inclusive growth, employment creation, and poverty alleviation.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8 & 9), promote sustained economic growth, innovation, and the formalization of small enterprises to increase productivity and resilience.

- National Small Business Act (1996, amended 2003), provides a regulatory framework for the promotion, support, and development of small businesses in South Africa.
- NSDF (2022), identifies SMMEs as critical actors in enabling functional urban economies, regional trade, and inclusive spatial transformation.
- LSDF (2025) & LDP (2025), emphasize SMMEs as vital for local economic development, encouraging their growth through improved access to markets, infrastructure, finance, and skills development.
- TLM SDF (2019–2023) & LED Strategy (2021), highlight the importance of SMME support in urban and rural nodes, recommending interventions to strengthen enterprise sustainability, access to municipal support, and linkages with other economic sectors.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Economic Diversification: Strengthening SMMEs reduces dependency on large employers and government procurement, diversifying the local economic base.
- Employment Creation: Targeted support for SMMEs can generate jobs, particularly for youth and women, contributing to poverty alleviation and local economic resilience.
- Capacity Building and Support Programs: Training, mentoring, access to finance, and streamlined business support services are required to improve survival rates beyond ten years.



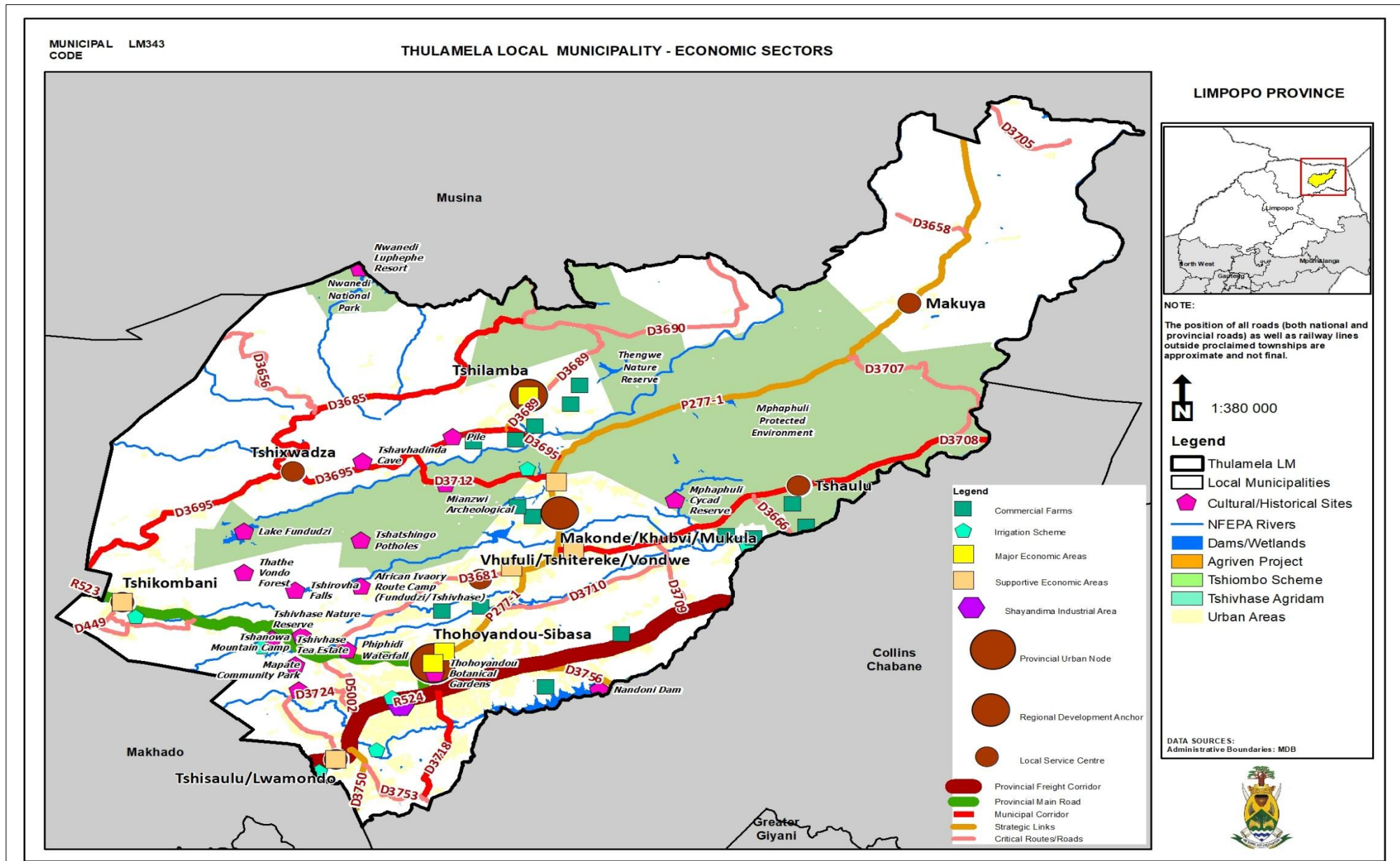


- Integration with Other Sectors: SMMEs should be linked with agriculture, tourism, trade, and industry to enhance value chains, supply networks, and market access.
- Spatial and Environmental Considerations: Expansion of SMMEs must be aligned with municipal spatial planning, ensuring that business activities do not compromise sensitive vegetation, ecological corridors, or strategic water and natural resources in compliance with NEMA (1998) and NEMBA (2004).
- Policy Alignment: Municipal interventions should reflect and support SDGs 8 & 9, NDP 2030, NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025) to create a structured, resilient, and sustainable SMME sector that contributes meaningfully to TLM's economy.





Map 24: Economic Sectors





3.3.8.7 Pressure Points – Social and Economic Infrastructure

Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) continues to face complex socio-economic dynamics shaped by factors such as population growth, migration, uneven service delivery, and persistently high levels of poverty and inequality. These dynamics place significant pressure on social and economic infrastructure, including housing, education, healthcare, transportation, and utility services.

This section identifies critical infrastructure pressure points within the municipality and highlights priority intervention areas, proposing spatially informed strategies to guide planning, investment, and development prioritisation. Addressing these challenges requires the integration of socio-economic development objectives with spatial and environmental planning to ensure equitable access to services, sustainable settlement growth, and enhanced quality of life for all residents.

The management of socio-economic pressures and infrastructure development in TLM is informed by the following key legislation and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Sections 24, 26, 27 & 153), mandates the municipality to provide equitable access to housing, basic services, and social infrastructure while promoting sustainable development.
- Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (2000, amended 2011), requires integrated development planning (IDP) to guide municipal service delivery, prioritise investment, and support spatial development initiatives.

- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, emphasises reducing poverty and inequality, strengthening social infrastructure, and aligning economic growth with inclusive development.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1, 6, 8, 9 & 11), provide targets for poverty reduction, access to essential services, economic opportunity, and sustainable cities and communities.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022), highlights the need to integrate social infrastructure, economic nodes, and environmental assets in spatial planning to improve service delivery and support inclusive economic development.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) & Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025), guide regional and local spatial investment, prioritising areas with high socio-economic need and identifying strategic nodes for infrastructure, services, and economic opportunity.
- TLM Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2023–2028, serves as the municipal framework for addressing local socio-economic pressures, coordinating investment, and promoting equitable service provision across urban and rural areas.





Implications for TLM SDF Review:

- **Strategic Infrastructure Planning:** Identifying and prioritising social and economic infrastructure investment in high-need areas to reduce service backlogs and improve quality of life.
- **Spatially-Informed Interventions:** Applying SDF principles to guide the placement of infrastructure, housing, and services in ways that support sustainable settlements and reduce pressure on ecological and agricultural land.
- **Equitable Economic Development:** Leveraging infrastructure planning to stimulate local economies, support SMMEs, and reduce inequality across urban and rural communities.
- **Alignment with Policy Frameworks:** Ensuring all interventions are consistent with the NDP, SDGs, NSDF, LSDF, LDP, and municipal IDP to promote integrated, sustainable, and inclusive growth.

3.3.8.7.1 Social Infrastructure Pressure Points

a) Inadequate Access to Healthcare Facilities

Access to Health Care: Despite the presence of two district/regional hospitals and 39 clinics across Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), significant gaps persist in equitable access to healthcare services. These gaps are primarily driven by long travel distances to health facilities, limited availability of medicines, and shortages of skilled healthcare personnel at local clinics.

Table 13: Health Facility Gaps

Ward	No. of Clinics	District Hospital Present	Gap Description
6	2	None	A very low coverage of area that is serviced by the clinics, meaning residents will have to travel a long distance to access services

Implications for TLM:

- **Public Health Inequities:** Residents in remote and rural areas are disproportionately affected, leading to delayed treatment, increased morbidity, and higher vulnerability to preventable diseases.
- **Pressure on Regional Hospitals:** Centralized healthcare facilities face higher patient loads due to inadequate access at local clinics, potentially compromising the quality and efficiency of service delivery.
- **Impact on Human Development:** Poor access to healthcare negatively affects education, labor productivity, and overall community well-being, reinforcing cycles of poverty and inequality.
- **Spatial Planning Considerations:** Future settlement and infrastructure planning must integrate healthcare accessibility as a key criterion, aligning with the LSDF (2025), LDP (2025), and NSDF (2022) to prioritize clinic placement and transport connectivity in underserved areas.





- **Policy Alignment:** Addressing these gaps supports SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), the National Development Plan (NDP 2030) targets for improved healthcare coverage, and TLM's IDP commitments to equitable service delivery.

b) Educational Infrastructure Deficits

Education indicators in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) reveal notable disparities. While the municipality achieved a matric pass rate of 85.3% in 2024, access to basic and higher education remains unequal. TLM has 236 primary schools and 96 secondary schools, which falls short of CSIR population thresholds, partly due to the closure of some schools. Currently, there is approximately 1 primary school per 2,400–3,000 people and 1 secondary school per 2,500–12,500 people, indicating significant gaps in provision

Table 14: Educational Pressure Points

Ward	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Pressure Point
6	Moderate Coverage	Low Coverage	Characterised by a very low number of secondary schools which cover a portion of the ward area, and a slightly larger number of schools which still do not provide total coverage of the ward area, especial in the north eastern side of the ward.

➤ Implications for TLM:

- **Unequal Access:** Students in densely populated or remote areas face longer travel distances, higher dropout rates, and limited access to quality education.
- **Pressure on Existing Schools:** Overcrowding in functioning schools reduces the quality of teaching and learning, affecting academic outcomes.
- **Impact on Human Capital Development:** Limited access to education constrains skill development, reduces employment opportunities, and perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality.
- **Spatial Planning and Service Delivery:** Future settlement planning and school infrastructure development must consider population distribution, school catchment areas, and accessibility, in line with the LSDF (2025), LDP (2025), and NSDF (2022).
- **Policy Alignment:** Addressing educational gaps supports SDG 4 (Quality Education), NDP 2030 targets for universal access to basic education, and TLM's IDP priorities to expand and improve education facilities in underserved areas.

c) Sanitation and Water Provision Constraints

Access to piped water and sanitation in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) remains uneven.





Approximately 26% of households have piped water inside the dwelling, 33.7% have it in their yard, 22.1% rely on community standpipes, and 18.2% have no access at all. Sanitation provision is similarly unequal, with the majority of households (66%) relying on pit toilets, while only 28% have flush toilets connected to a main sewer line or septic tank. According to the Thulamela Integrated Sustainable Housing Sector Plan, several wards including wards 3, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 41 still require the provision of sewer infrastructure.

Implications for TLM:

- **Public Health and Safety:** Limited access to safe water and adequate sanitation increases the risk of waterborne diseases and environmental contamination, particularly in high-density or underserved wards.
- **Socio-economic Inequality:** Unequal service provision reinforces disparities between urban and rural communities, affecting vulnerable populations most severely.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Reliance on pit toilets without proper management can contaminate groundwater and affect surrounding vegetation and ecosystems, highlighting the need for environmentally sensitive sanitation planning.
- **Infrastructure and Service Planning:** There is a critical need for targeted investment in water and sanitation networks, especially in wards identified by the Thulamela Housing Sector Plan, ensuring alignment with population growth, settlement patterns, and environmental sensitivity.

- **Policy and Legislative Alignment:** Addressing these gaps supports SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 27), the National Development Plan 2030, the National Water Act (1998), and the Municipal Systems Act (2000) by promoting equitable access to essential services.
- **Spatial Planning Implications:** Future settlement planning and SDF-aligned development must prioritize the extension of piped water and sewer networks in high-need wards, integrate stormwater and ecological management, and prevent the degradation of sensitive vegetation and critical biodiversity areas.

d) Solid Waste Management and Illegal Dumping

Refuse removal services in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) are extremely limited, with only 0.5% of households receiving weekly municipal refuse collection, primarily in urban areas such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa, and adjacent townships. A small portion of households (2.7%) utilize communal dumps or containers, while 6.9% have no access to any formal waste disposal services. The majority of households in rural and informal areas (approximately 58.9%) rely on their own refuse dumps, creating localized environmental and health hazards.

Implications for TLM:

- **Public Health Risks:** Inadequate refuse removal and reliance on informal dumping increase exposure to disease vectors, pollutants, and pathogens, particularly in rural and informal settlements.





- **Environmental Degradation:** Unmanaged waste contributes to soil, surface water, and groundwater contamination, threatening local vegetation, biodiversity, and ecosystem services.
- **Spatial Inequities:** The disparity in waste management between urban and rural areas exacerbates service delivery inequities, reinforcing socio-economic disparities across TLM.
- **Pressure on Municipal Services:** Low coverage of formal waste management increases the burden on municipal resources, as informal dumping can lead to blockages, fires, and uncontrolled pollution that require cleanup and monitoring.
- **Policy and Legislative Alignment:** Enhancing waste management services aligns with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), as well as the National Environmental Management: Waste Act (2008), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24), the National Development Plan (NDP 2030), and LSDF (2025) / LDP (2025) directives for sustainable municipal service delivery.
- **Spatial Planning Implications:**
 - Strategic placement of waste collection points, transfer stations, and recycling facilities is essential to improve service coverage, reduce environmental impacts, and integrate waste management with settlement expansion while protecting sensitive vegetation and ecological corridors.

e) Crime and Safety

Access to Policing and Safety, Thohoyandou Policing Area is one of the busiest SAPS stations nationally for community-reported crimes, including robbery, property crime, and vehicle theft, while Tshaulu leads in sexual offences and grievous bodily harm (GBH). Low police presence in densely populated and rural settlements such as Ha-Makuya, Phiphidi, Tshisaulu, Tshikhudini, and Tshilamba/Mutale exacerbates community vulnerability to crime. Some areas, including Khalavha, Tshikombani, and surrounding villages, fall under the Siloam Policing Area in Makhado Local Municipality (MKLM), highlighting the need for intergovernmental coordination between TLM, MKLM, and Musina Local Municipality (MLM) to enhance safety and service delivery.

Implications for TLM:

- **Community Safety and Well-being:** Limited police presence increases residents' vulnerability, reduces public confidence, and undermines social cohesion, particularly in rural and high-density settlements.
- **Socio-economic Impact:** High crime levels affect local businesses, tourism, and investment, restricting economic growth and employment opportunities within TLM.
- **Spatial Inequities:** Crime is disproportionately concentrated in underserved or peripheral areas, emphasizing the need for targeted policing and safety interventions informed by settlement patterns.
- **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Cross-boundary policing coordination is essential to address crime in areas where municipal





boundaries intersect, ensuring effective deployment of resources and consistent law enforcement.

Policy and Legislative Alignment:

Strengthening public safety aligns with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 205), the White Paper on Safety and Security (1998), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), the National Development Plan (NDP 2030) objective to reduce crime and improve safety, and the LSDF (2025) / LDP (2025) directive to integrate safety considerations into spatial planning and urban management.

3.3.8.7.2 Economic Infrastructure Pressure Points

a) Persistent Poverty and Inequality

Poverty and inequality in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) from 2000 to 2010 were largely concentrated in rural villages that lacked access to clean water, sanitation, electricity, and road infrastructure. Some improvements were observed from 2015 through national service delivery programmes, but significant service gaps persisted.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 exacerbated challenges, including a sharp decline in available farming land, reducing livelihoods and food security. As of 2025, approximately 66% of residents still rely on pit latrines and firewood, reflecting ongoing backlogs in basic services, which remain a major driver of poverty and inequality throughout the municipality.

Implications for TLM:

- Persistent Service Backlogs: Limited access to water, sanitation, electricity, and transport infrastructure perpetuates socio-economic vulnerability, particularly in rural communities.
- Impact on Livelihoods and Food Security: Reduction in arable land and agricultural productivity reduces household incomes and limits opportunities for commercial or subsistence farming.
- Health and Environmental Risks: Reliance on pit latrines and firewood contributes to water contamination, indoor air pollution, deforestation, and broader environmental degradation, affecting vegetation and ecosystems.
- Intergenerational Poverty: Inadequate access to basic services and productive land reinforces cycles of poverty, limiting education, employment, and human capital development.
- Policy and Legislative Alignment: Addressing poverty and inequality aligns with SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), NDP 2030, and TLM's commitments under the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). It also requires implementation of national programmes such as Operation Sukuma Sakhe and infrastructure policies under the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (2000).
- Spatial Planning Implications: Strategic spatial planning should prioritize service provision in underserved villages, equitable distribution of infrastructure, and support for productive land use to enhance livelihoods, reduce inequality, and protect environmentally





sensitive areas, in alignment with the NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025).

b) Underutilisation of Agricultural and Tourism Potential

Approximately 14.62% of land in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) is used for agriculture, but existing municipal documents do not clearly quantify the sector's contribution to the local GDP. Despite the presence of fertile land, irrigation schemes, and commercial and smallholder farms, the agricultural sector is in decline, reflecting challenges such as limited market access, reduced investment, climate variability, and competition for land from urban expansion. Similarly, tourism attractions in TLM, including natural, cultural, and heritage sites, are not fully integrated into local economic development strategies, limiting their potential to generate revenue, create employment, and stimulate related sectors such as hospitality and transport.

Implications for TLM:

- **Economic Vulnerability:** Declining agriculture reduces income generation and food security, particularly for smallholder and subsistence farmers.
- **Underutilised Tourism Potential:** Lack of integration between tourism assets and the local economy limits job creation, investment, and diversification of municipal revenue streams.
- **Rural-Urban Inequality:** Declining agricultural activity and underdeveloped tourism infrastructure exacerbate socio-economic disparities between urban and rural communities.

- **Policy and Legislative Alignment:** Strengthening agriculture and tourism aligns with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), NDP 2030, and the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025), which identifies agriculture and tourism as key sectors in the Eastern Region. Supportive policies also include the Municipal Systems Act (2000), Agricultural Policy Frameworks, and the Tourism Act (2014).
- **Spatial Planning Implications:** Strategic land-use planning should protect high-potential agricultural land, enhance tourism corridors and nodal development, and align with NSDF (2022), LSDF (2025), and LDP (2025) to improve sectoral contributions to local economic development.
- **Investment and Capacity Needs:** There is a need for investment in irrigation, agro-processing, marketing infrastructure, and tourism-related facilities, as well as capacity building for smallholder farmers and local tourism operators.

c) Spatial Inequality in Infrastructure Investment

Access to electricity for lighting in Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) is relatively high at 94.1%, indicating substantial household electrification. However, only 69.9% of households use electricity for cooking, highlighting persistent cost and affordability barriers.

In addition, broadband connectivity and public transport infrastructure, particularly tarred roads, are limited in rural areas and high-density





settlements. This restricts residents' access to employment, education, and markets, and constrains broader economic participation.

Implications for TLM:

- **Energy Poverty:** High electrification for lighting does not translate into full energy access; reliance on alternative cooking fuels (e.g., firewood) can increase indoor air pollution, environmental degradation, and health risks.
- **Economic Access Constraints:** Limited broadband and poor transport connectivity reduce access to jobs, markets, and economic opportunities, particularly in rural communities.
- **Spatial Inequalities:** Infrastructure gaps between urban nodes and peripheral areas reinforce socio-economic disparities and limit inclusive development.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Continued use of firewood for cooking contributes to deforestation, loss of vegetation, and reduced carbon sequestration.
- **Policy and Legislative Alignment:** Improving energy and infrastructure access aligns with SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), the National Development Plan (NDP 2030), Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025), and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025), which promote equitable and sustainable service provision. Relevant legislation includes the Electrification Programme under the Department of Energy and the Municipal Systems Act (2000).

- **Spatial Planning Implications:** Infrastructure development strategies should prioritize rural and high-density settlements for electrification, broadband expansion, and road upgrading. Integrating these services into SDF-aligned spatial planning will enhance economic access, reduce inequalities, and support sustainable land use.





3.4 BUILT ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

The built environment reflects the socio-economic base and patterns in any given space. The term “built environment” encompasses elements of our surroundings that are constructed by humans, distinct from the natural environment. It encompasses not only structures but also the human-created spaces between them, as well as the infrastructure that facilitates human activities, including transportation networks, essential services, and the interconnection of infrastructure with land use.

3.4.1 Spatial Structure of TLM

Tohoyandou is the largest urban area, and is declared as a Provincial Urban Node (Limpopo Spatial Development Framework, 2025). Moreover, it is a proclaimed area with the major central business district (CBD) also known as Tohoyandou BA, which then represents a variety of land uses within the CBD and includes the following Land – Uses:

- ✚ Business – this is inclusive of hardwares, Fuel Stations, auto-spares, etc.
- ✚ Educational – this is inclusive of private colleges, bible school, etc.
- ✚ Government/Municipal – this is inclusive of TLM offices, Police Station, Magistrate offices, Tohoyandou Labour Offices, Tohoyandou Town Hall,
- ✚ Medical – this is inclusive of Surgeries (Private Clinics)
- ✚ Mixed-Use – this is inclusive of Venda Plaza which is a popular shopping centre with a range of retailers, Sabina Plaza – Retail centre on Mphephu Main Road with shops and services, Matidza Complex which is mainly a mixed retail complex, Game Tohoyandou which is a large

department store with electronics, homeware, and more, SPAR Tohoyandou which is a supermarket and everyday retail.

- ✚ Transportation – this is inclusive of the Taxi and Bus Ranks
- ✚ Retail – this is inclusive of stores serving grocery, fashion, electronics, home goods, and services, serving local residents, students, municipal employees, and visitors.
- ✚ Offices – this is inclusive of office parks like Bindulavhathu, Limdev building which is mostly office space.
- ✚ The CBD is also faced with challenges of dilapidated buildings

On the periphery of the CBD, there are a variety of land uses, which are therefore characterized as follows:

- ✚ Mixed – Use (offices, older residential housing, hardwares, warehouses, Medical, etc.)
- ✚ Lower land values than the CBD core
- ✚ Transition zone between the CBD and residential area such as Tohoyandou F, Tohoyandou P, Golgotha which are characterized by rental, student accommodation, overnight accommodation, back-yarding,
- ✚ Educational
- ✚ Municipal/Government

Tohoyandou is also an administrative and services, and agriculture gateway with both the VDM and TLM offices, together with several government departments regional offices located within this provincial urban node according to the LSDF, 2025, with the only significant industrial area within the municipality known as Shayandima Industrial area.





Sibasa to the north of Thohoyandou is functionally part of the broader Thohoyandou urban/proclaimed area, as it holds a separate business node (CBD). Sibasa CBD is relatively smaller compared to Thohoyandou CBD, and it mainly consists of the following Land – Uses

- ✚ Business – this is inclusive of hardware stores, Fuel Stations, auto-spares, etc.
- ✚ Medical – this is inclusive of Surgeries (Private Clinics)
- ✚ Mixed-Use
- ✚ Transportation – this is inclusive of the Taxi and Bus Ranks
- ✚ Retail – this is inclusive of stores serving grocery, fashion, electronics, home goods, and services, serving local residents, students and municipal employees.
- ✚ The CBD is also characterized by dilapidated buildings.

On the periphery of the Sibasa CBD, there are a variety of land uses, which are therefore characterized as follows:

- ✚ Mixed – Use (offices, older residential housing, hardware stores, warehouses, Medical, fuel stations, etc.)
- ✚ Lower land values than the CBD core
- ✚ Transition zone between the CBD and residential area, which are characterized by rental, student accommodation, overnight accommodation, back-yarding,
- ✚ Educational
- ✚ Municipal/Government

However, Tshilamba is also the second proclaimed area under TLM, and has the same characteristics as Thohoyandou and Sibasa, and is growing at a fascinating rate with a variety of institutions and social services, with a small light industrial precinct together with a variety of government/municipal institutions and public social amenities, which are servicing the entire north central parts of TLM, and this includes areas such as Thengwe, Phalama, Mulodi, Dzimauli just to name a few.

Most of the rural/human settlements within TLM are densely populated areas with a small number of isolated rural settlements and informal settlements mostly characterized by areas of dense and growing human settlements that require strengthening of nodes, connectivity and basic service provision to improve quality of life and open up access to economic opportunities limiting sprawl.

Secondly these rural/human settlements in TLM are also characterised by mixed used developments along major intersection and major routes such as the R524 which is identified as a Transformation Corridor as well as a Provincial Freight Corridor, the R523 which is also identified as the Provincial Main Road Network together with the P277-1 which is also described as the Strategic Link according to the LSDF, 2025.

Furthermore, these mixed used developments are also characterized by conflicting land uses and this is mainly as a result of non-compliance and poor implementation of TLM SPLUM By-Laws, 2016 and with most businesses informal as this is mostly evident in the identified nodes within their business





areas along the provincial freight corridor, provincial main road network and the strategic link, as the major routes in TLM.

3.4.2 Settlement Typology

Table 15: Settlement Typology

Settlement Name	Service Role
Thohoyandou-Sibasa	Provincial Urban Node
Tshilamba	Regional Development Anchor
Makonde/Khubvi/Mukula	Regional Development Anchor
Lwamondo/Tshisaulu	Local Service Centre
Tshitereke/Vhufuli/Vondwe	Local Service Centre
Tshikombani	Local Service Centre
Makuya	Local Service Centre
Tshaulu/Gaba/Tshifudi	Local Service Centre
Tshixwadza	Local Service Centre

Source: Limpopo Spatial Development Framework, 2025

This classification is in line with the settlement typology/classification of settlements by the LSDF, 2025 aligning with the NSDF, 2022 and these are defined as follows:

Provincial Urban Node – previously also known as Provincial Growth Points, represent the fast-growing urban areas or nodes within the province, both in terms of population growth and prospects for economic growth. (Limpopo Spatial Development Framework, 2025).

Settlement growth should preferably be consolidated in the existing large and emerging and fast-growing urban nodes. However, the development and emergence of new cities in identified densely populated and high-potential transformation corridors, should be proactively supported.

Most of these existing urban nodes have established and diverse economies, together with a range of higher order social and government services contributing towards its preference for human settlement development.

However, some nodes are currently experiencing rapid urbanisation and population growth but lacks the necessary infrastructure and bulk services to growth and investment.

Although these nodes have immense resource potential, predominantly mineral and agriculture, they require a consolidated effort to ensure development and economic prosperity.

Unlike National Urban Nodes however, these Provincial Nodes require public sector intervention and investment to ensure that future economic development will be undertaken by the private sector. Investment in new or additional engineering infrastructure and social services to serve the fast-growing local population, is therefore necessary.

Regional Development Anchors – previously known as District or Municipal Growth Points comprise nodes which are strategically located in productive rural regions and priority national development, trade and transport corridors. (Limpopo Spatial Development Framework, 2025)





These nodes provide a range of services within the specific towns/cities and surrounding network of settlements and productive rural regions, of which most of them are very well positioned along the national and provincial movement networks and have a strong resource base (including mineral potential and agricultural activities), whilst others represent large rural settlement clusters, but with very small economic and institutional bases, and very limited local resources on which to build.

They function as high order service centres, have relatively large local populations, and have relatively well-established institutional cores, and most of them, relatively strong economies. However, while some of them may have well-established local economies, others lack economic and engineering infrastructure due to years of under-investment or due to recent rapid population growth.

Despite the above mentioned, all these nodes have potential for economic growth, which should be supported by public investment in infrastructure. However, high levels of public investment are needed to unlock the potential of historically under-invested nodes.

Regional Development Anchors must be supported and strengthened through:

- Targeted settlement planning and development
- Higher-order social infrastructure provision
- Focused support for small and medium-sized enterprise development, industrialisation and economic diversification

These development anchors should further:

- Serve as rural regions for commuting labour to reside in, and contribute to the local economy, instead of commuting to larger towns or cities on a daily or weekly/monthly basis
- Create gateways and interchanges on the regional public transportation network, and to incorporate it into the planning of 'functional rural regions'
- Connect traditional areas and rural settlements with higher-order urban settlements and economic systems in functional rural regions, by making use of the road and rail network and regional corridor development
- Use investment and planning of social infrastructure to establish and create well-functioning, compact and lively rural settlements and 'regional rural systems'

Rural Service Centre/ Local Service Centre, previously also known as Rural Nodes or Service Points generally have limited economic and institutional bases at present. Social services are to be consolidated at these nodes to efficiently serve the extensive surrounding rural communities. (Limpopo Spatial Development Framework, 2025)

Although small local economies might emerge over time because of the proposed agglomeration of public services, it is acknowledged that the economic potential of these nodes is less than in Urban Nodes and Regional Development Anchors.





The focus should thus be on community infrastructure and not necessarily economic infrastructure.

Rural development must be supported through this network of prioritised service centres where people in rural areas and settlements can be optimally provided with municipal and social services, and where rural logistics and support can be provided to support rural development.

Specific support must be provided to:

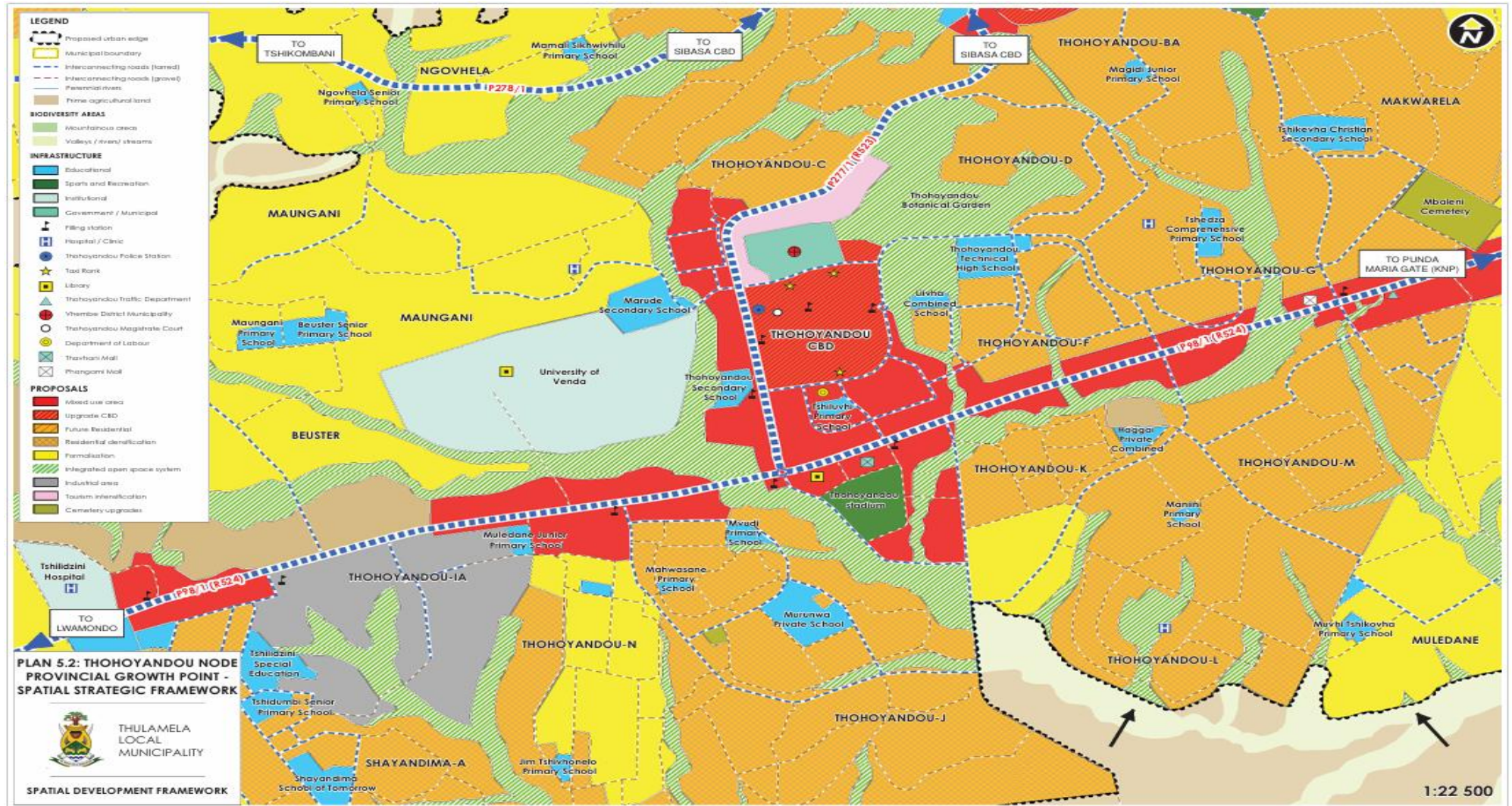
- Towns that act as border towns and trade posts
- Growing towns in border regions
- Town in dense rural settlement regions. Consolidation within nodal centres and rural design is required.





3.4.3. Thohoyandou Sibasa – Provincial Urban Node

Figure 17: Thohoyandou



TLM SDF, 2019-2023





Tohoyandou was previously identified as a Provincial Growth Point, currently identified as a Provincial Urban Node and is the major urban node which has experienced significant growth over the years and provides services to the broader TLM, with a significant percentage of the population moving/relocating to Tohoyandou in search for better employment, improved service delivery and wider variety of products and services.

Tohoyandou is surrounded by prime agricultural land with limited opportunity to expand in any direction.

3.4.3.1 Residential Development

- Infill developments and high-density residential within Tohoyandou node have now changed the residential character of Tohoyandou P, Golgotha and most parts of the Tohoyandou proclaimed area especially in areas earmarked for mixed land uses.
- Provision of internal paved street in the residential developments in the north and western parts of the Univen towards Ngovhela.
- Tohoyandou-D still retains its low-density residential character and the area to the north of VDM and Phalaphala FM offices are earmarked for tourism uses as the area falls under SANBI.
- The Limpopo Development Plan (LDP), 2025-2030 already identifies TLM as a PHSFDA municipality, which means it should be a focus for:
 - Housing and human settlement integration.
 - Spatial transformation to reduce inequality.
 - Scaling up infrastructure to support the identified spatial priorities.

Thus, in TLM planning documents such as the IDP, TLMSDF under Review, should ensure coherence with LSDF, 2025 and Development Plan, especially:

- Use land use zoning and TLM SPLUM By-laws, 2016 to codify spatial priorities.
- Ensure PHSFDA rollout is aligned with infrastructure budgets/grant funding.

3.4.3.2 Mixed Use Development

- Most business/commercial development along the existing R524 the provincial freight corridor and P277/1 the strategic link roads are promoting mixed use development within Tohoyandou proclaimed area, the south western part of Tohoyandou F, P, Golgotha, etc., as the TLM SDF under review has designated these areas for mixed used development.
- Urban Renewal Strategies and the Thulamela Urban Development and Revitalization Framework has strengthened businesses and economic activities within the existing CBD, with a strong emphasis on retail/commercial uses.

3.4.3.3 Industrial Development

According to the LSDF, 2025 Tohoyandou which is currently an administrative and services gateway is also earmarked for the development of an Industrial Park and contributions will be made to Tohoyandou Industrial Area.

Industrial development still remains a challenge as the relocation of hardware's away from the Tohoyandou CBD to Tohoyandou IA is still not forthcoming, and this will also permit the relocation of light industrial and





commercial developments to the north of Thohoyandou IA, along the provincial freight corridor the R524 as the LSDF, 2025 prescribes.

3.4.3.4 Tourism and Accommodation

Thohoyandou as a node also forms part of the Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition Areas according to the LSDF, 2025 and therefore houses a lot of lodging and rental facilities (i.e, Khoroni Hotel) with Nandoni dam (i.e, Kalahari, Nandoni Waterfront) also providing the same platform for high intensity tourism development facilities. Thohoyandou Botanical Gardens, which under SANBI, also forms part of this provincial urban node.

3.4.3.5 Agriculture

In and around Thohoyandou provincial urban node there is no space for agricultural production as the residential component and residential expansion has encroached in these areas of agricultural potential. Infill and high residential developments have been promoted in a manner which is not sustainable and thus situated in these areas.

The LSDF, 2025 has also identified Thohoyandou as an agricultural gateway, as it is the home to tropical and subtropical agricultural products and emphasises the establishment of agricultural support facilities as well as support for small-scale and subsistence farmers to improve production and access to markets.

3.4.3.6 Open Space

The banks of the rivers/streams are environmental sensitive with conservation value and floodline areas, environmental sensitive areas and areas with

geotechnical constraints are currently been developed and no floodline is respected. As a node Thohoyandou lacks the open space system hence community park which are functional.

3.4.3.7 Challenges

a. Loading and Offloading Zone

- The presence of several informal loading areas where trucks stop alongside the roadside creates congestion issues for incoming traffic and obstructs pedestrian movement, particularly when loading activities spill over onto the sidewalks.
- Formalized and designated loading zones i.e Thohoyandou Usave and behind Goldvagen and Excel garage popularly known as Tshibevha, are available but are not being utilized effectively, exacerbating the traffic congestion.
- A strategy that can be effective can be to develop designated loading zones and optimizing delivery schedules together with truck stops outside the CBD.

b. Pathways invaded by street vendors

- Tshivhase street in the CBD faces tension between street vendors, vehicles, and pedestrians, because the pathways are used as selling points and vehicles park along the pathways. This compromises the safety and walkability of pedestrians.





- Almost all streets within Thohoyandou CBD are characterised by the vendors and motor mechanics fighting for space to their business activities

c. Blocked Stormwater Drainage and Sanitation

- There is an existing stormwater drainage system within Thohoyandou CBD, and most of them are blocked and damaged, which makes the environment within the CBD to be uncondusive.
- In rainy days, it makes water to remain on roads, and this also makes it difficult for pedestrians to use the road, because they get to be splashed by water while cars are moving.
- A strategy that can be effective can be clear blockages and improve drainage system to prevent ponding.
- Sewer spillages in and around Thohoyandou CBD and Thohoyandou P

d. Informal Truckstop

- Behind Game Centre, along the Mphephu Drive, there is an informal truckstop, which threatens the safety of pedestrians, especially in evenings.
- It can also increase criminal activities, because the trucks can be targeted.
- A strategy that can be effective is to have a truck stop in places outside the CBD and further away from dense residential areas

e. Lack of Landscaping within Thohoyandou CBD

- Lack of street furniture within the CBD
- Without seating, shade structures, and public amenities, pedestrians have fewer places to rest or seek shelter, reducing the attractiveness and accessibility of the CBD.
- A strategy that can be effective is to have street furniture within the CBD.

Challenges in this node also include:

- Land availability for future developments as the node is land locked,
- No functional Open Spaces
- Protection of sensitive ecological areas as well as prime agricultural land, poor implementation of TLM SPLUM By-Laws, 2016 as well as compliance.
- Implementation of development strategies or policies, which does not respond to the developmental challenges of this node.

3.4.3.8 Opportunities

a. Street upgrading

Along the Garden route, there has been street upgrade, walkways are paved and there is street furniture i.e streetlights, paving, and trees.





b. Pedestrian Infrastructure Enhancement along Tshivhase Street in the CBD.

The street can be transformed into a linear pedestrian road with a structured and vibrant marketplace achieved by formalizing informal traders, improved infrastructure including lighting, benches, and better sidewalks, light freight activity with a designated loading zone, all achieved through stakeholder engagement to establish parking and loading times.

c. Tourism Intensification

The reconstruction and redevelopment of Thohoyandou Botanical Garden serves this purpose, and therefore attract more visitors to the botanical garden.

d. Use of Renewable Energy

Encourage the use of solar energy within the CBD, to create a safer and healthier environment. This helps when there are power outages.

Opportunities in this node include:

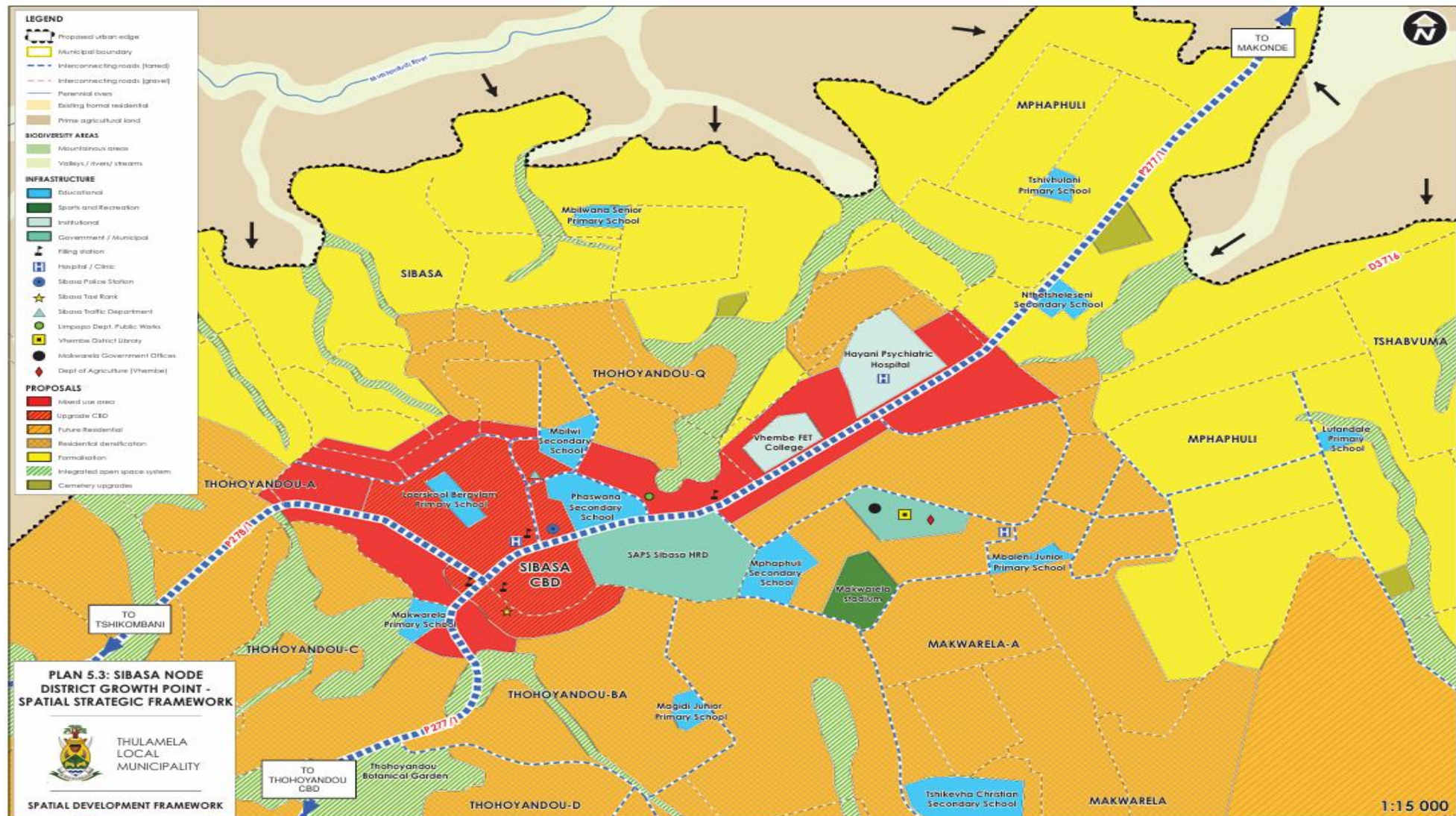
- Infill developments and densification especially in the underutilized spaces within the urban node thus promoting mixed use developments as well as high density residential developments,
- PHSFDA,
- Urban renewal and
- Access road upgrading and internal streets





3.4.4 Sibasa

Figure 18: Sibasa





Sibasa was identified as a District Growth Point, currently identified as a Provincial Urban node and is considered the second major urban area after Thohoyandou, and is also considered an important economic node in terms of the services, commercial and institutional functions it provides. (Limpopo Spatial Development Framework, 2025)

Sibasa is also surrounded by prime agricultural land with limited opportunity to expand in any direction and also lacks a formal industrial area.

3.4.4.1 Residential Development

Informal settlements are expanding as a result of insufficient formal housing, creating challenges for spatial planning and service provision.

3.4.4.2 Mixed Use Development

The Sibasa mixed-use zone already accommodates diverse land uses such as retail, tourism, commercial, industrial and other business activities

3.4.4.3 Tourism

Sibasa's tourism potential largely depends on the nearby Thohoyandou Botanical Garden as a key attraction. Lodging and rental facilities in Sibasa cater to tourists visiting the Botanical Garden, Nandoni dam and other cultural, heritage and tourism sites, offering small to medium-scale, accessible accommodations, including eco-lodges for nature and cultural tourism.

3.4.4.4 Open Space

The proposed IOSS within the Sibasa node remain undeveloped and untouched hence the management of these spaces remains critical.

Enabling economic infrastructure and proposed road linkages still remains a critical challenge and this is mainly as a result of municipal budgets and grants from national treasury.

3.4.4.5 Upgrade CBD

The CBD of Sibasa has not seen substantial development or upgrading. Many areas designated for commercial, retail, and service activities remain underdeveloped, lacking adequate infrastructure, formal buildings, and public amenities. Insufficient roads, pedestrian pathways, street lighting, parking, and public spaces limit the CBD's appeal to investors and businesses. Consequently, commercial growth is restricted, and informal or ad-hoc developments often emerge, hindering the orderly expansion and economic potential of the area.

3.4.4.6 Future Residential

According to TLM IDP Review (2024/25 -2026/2027), There is no land for future commercial and residential development in the Sibasa which is also part of the Thohoyandou proclaimed area.

3.4.4.7 Formalisation

Most of the area and settlements remains informal and unstructured.

3.4.4.8 Integrated Open Space System (IOSS)

The proposed IOSS within the Sibasa node remain undeveloped and no development is done on the areas.





3.4.4.9 Cemeteries Upgrades

Cemeteries within the Sibasa node especially those in rural settlements (Tshivhulani, Mbilwi, Lufule and so forth) remains underserved, reflecting gaps in municipal infrastructure and service delivery.

3.4.4.10 Challenges

a. Infrastructure Backlogs

- Sibasa faces significant pressure on its basic infrastructure, including water, sanitation, electricity, and stormwater systems.
- Many areas are underserved or rely on ageing networks, which hampers service delivery and limits the potential for new development.

b. Rapid Urban Growth

- The town is experiencing increasing population growth, which places pressure on land availability, housing, and municipal services.
- Informal settlements are expanding as a result of insufficient formal housing, creating challenges for spatial planning and service provision.

c. Uncoordinated Land Use

- Land development in Sibasa often occurs without adequate planning or control, leading to mixed-use areas that may conflict with one another.

- This uncoordinated growth sometimes encroaches into environmentally sensitive areas, increasing the risk of flooding and environmental degradation.

d. Traffic & Mobility Constraints

- Rising traffic volumes, particularly along major routes like P278, R523 the provincial main road network, and P277/1 a strategic link according to the LSDF, 2025.
- Limited public transport options and formal taxi facilities exacerbate congestion and reduce mobility for residents.
- Sibasa has few formal public transport facilities, and existing options are often unreliable or insufficient to meet the needs of residents.
- This limits mobility, increases reliance on private vehicles, contributes to congestion on main roads

e. Weak Economic Diversification

- The local economy relies heavily on small scale retail and informal trade, with limited growth in higher value sectors such as tourism, logistics, and commercial business.
- This lack of diversification reduces employment opportunities and constrains the town's economic resilience.

f. Pressure on Social Facilities

Rapid population growth has placed a strain on schools, clinics, and recreational facilities. Existing social infrastructure often operates beyond its intended capacity, limiting access to essential services and affecting the quality of life for residents.





g. Environmental Degradation

- Uncontrolled development and inadequate stormwater management contribute to soil erosion and the degradation of open spaces.
- Weak enforcement of environmental regulations further exposes the town to ecological risks and reduces its resilience to climate-related impacts.

h. Land Tenure and Governance Issues

Overlapping authority between Traditional Authorities and the municipal government creates challenges in land management and development approvals.

Challenges in the Sibasa node include:

- Land for future developments, protection of sensitive ecological areas as well as prime agricultural land,
- Poor implementation of TLM SPLUM By-Laws, 2016. Relocation and restructuring of hardware's, taxi and bus ranks.
- Management of functional Open Spaces.

3.4.4.11 Opportunities

a. Infrastructure Maintenance

Regular upkeep of street infrastructure, including pavements and roads in areas like the Sibasa CBD, is essential to enhance accessibility, attract businesses, and stimulate commercial activity.

b. Infill Development

Utilize vacant or underused land within existing residential areas to accommodate new housing, promoting efficient land use and reducing urban sprawl.

c. Formalization of Informal Settlements

Upgrade informal housing areas by providing proper infrastructure, services, and legal land tenure, improving living conditions and integrating them into the town fabric.

d. Mixed-Use Residential Areas

Combine residential units with commercial or community facilities along main roads and growth corridors, creating vibrant, accessible neighbourhoods.

e. Affordable and Social Housing

Develop housing options catering to low- and middle-income households to meet local demand and support socio-economic inclusion.

f. Residential Densification

Promote higher-density housing in strategic locations to optimize land use, improve service delivery efficiency, and support local economic activity.

Opportunities for the Sibasa node include:

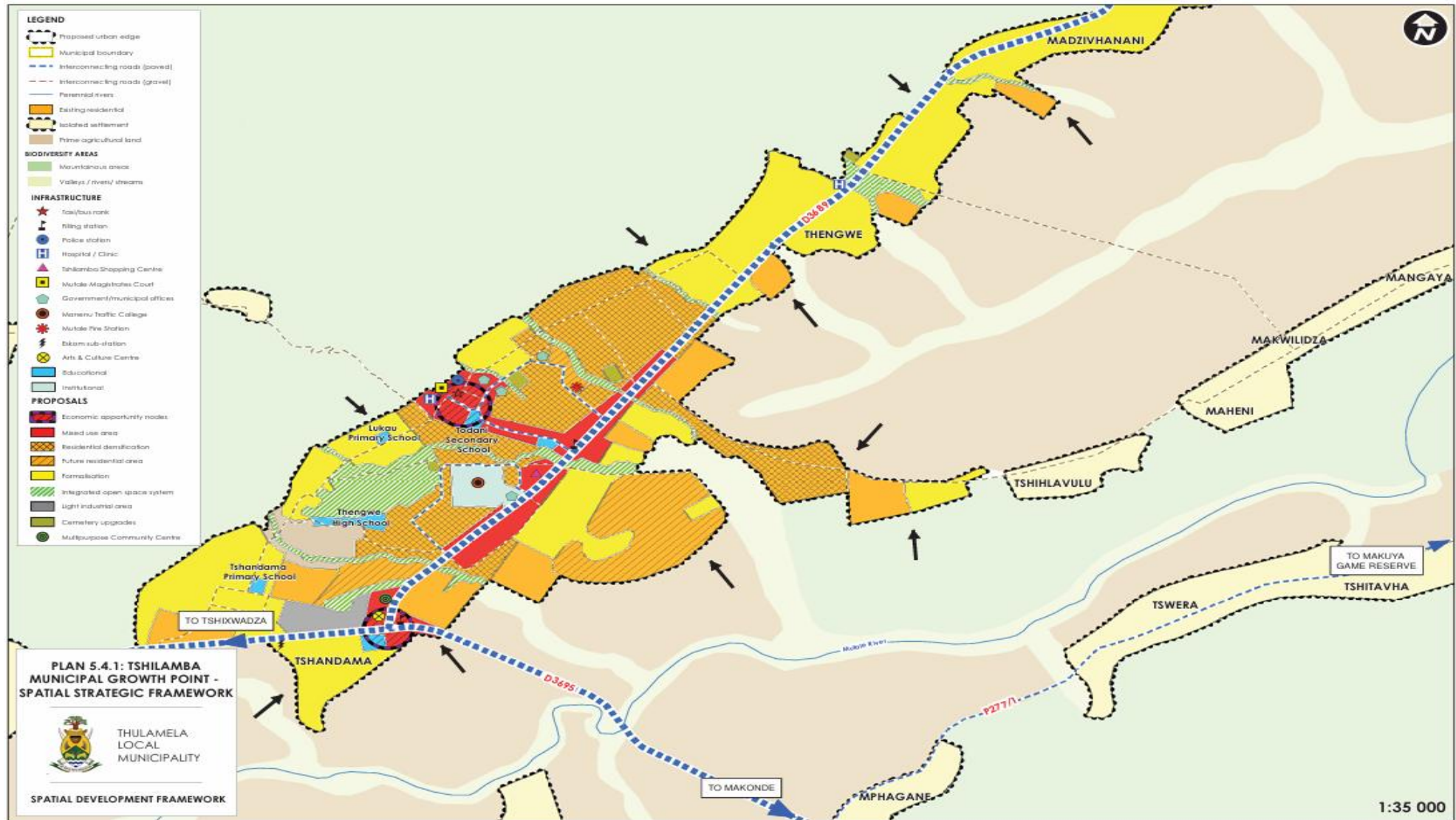
- Upgrading of the CBD, infill developments and densification especially in the underutilized spaces within the urban node thus promoting mixed use developments as well as high density residential developments,
- Urban renewal
- Access road upgrading and internal streets provision.





3.4.5 Tshilamba - Regional Development Anchor

Figure 19: Tshilamba - Regional Development Anchor





Tshilamba was identified as a Municipal Growth Point, currently identified as a Regional Development Anchor according to the LSDF, 2025 and has the same characteristics as Thohoyandou and Sibasa, however these are at a smaller scale. Moreover, Tshilamba is the second proclaimed area in TLM.

- Since the 2019 SDF, key projects at the Tshilamba nodal point include an almost complete multipurpose community centre (MPCC),
- Undeveloped flood lines serving as integrated open space, and a mixed-use zone supporting residential and commercial activities.
- Formerly designated future residential land is now developed, while economic opportunity nodes at Makhithani and Tshilamba Retail Centre are active, providing diverse services including healthcare, in line with the 2019 TLM SDF.

3.4.5.1 Challenges

- a) Formalization initiatives in Lukau and Tshandama remains pending,
 - b) Cemetery upgrades have not been implemented,
 - c) The designated light industrial zone at the intersection of D3689 and D3695 has yet to be activated for its intended purpose.
 - d) Misalignment of current land use and stand allocations within the designated light industrial area, which deviates from the TLM SDF under review zoning intentions.
 - e) Restricting development in flood line areas along rivers, streams.
 - f) Functional open spaces and protection of prime agricultural land.
 - g) Sand mining permits.
- Poor implementation of TLM SPLUM By-Law.

- Mushrooming of informal business
- Along the D3689 going toward Thengwe, informal businesses are rapidly expanding, driven by socio-economic factors such as unemployment and limited access to formal employment opportunities.
- Residents have established roadside stalls to sell food and clothing as a survival strategy, reflecting the need for integrated planning that accommodates informal economic activities while ensuring road safety and orderly land use.

3.4.5.2 Opportunities

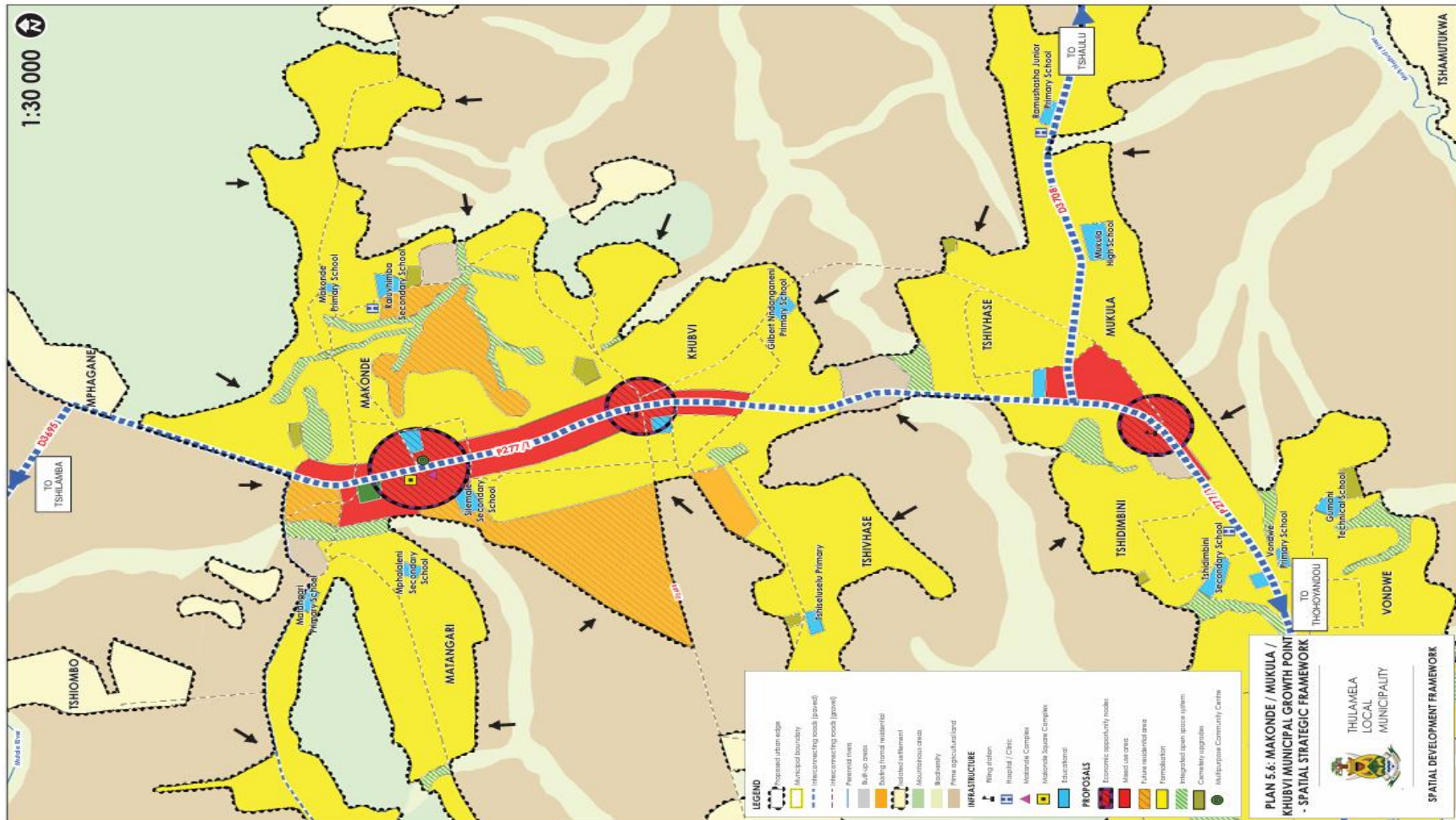
- Tenure upgrading.
- High density residential developments.
- Rural restructuring.
- Access Road upgrading, including internal streets.
- Tshilamba also forms part of the Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition area as well as the Environment and Tourism Focus Area according to the LSDF, 2025





3.4.6 Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi - Regional Development Anchor

Figure 20: Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi - Regional Development Anchor





Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi was identified as a Municipal Growth Point, currently identified as a Regional Development Anchor and in the central region of the TLM, along route P277-1 a strategic link and also forms part of the Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition area as well as the Environment and Tourism Focus Area according to the LSDF, 2025 with a concentration of diverse community facilities, services, and economic activities. These activities are primarily clustered around three smaller nodes: Makonde, Mukula, and Khubvi.

3.4.6.1 Economic Opportunity Nodes

The Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi node has formal recognition as a growth point under the district's spatial planning framework. However, on the ground implementation in terms of infrastructure upgrades, economic hub development, sustainable commercial enterprises and services remains partial and uneven.

3.4.6.2 Integrated Open Space System

In the Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi node, the Integrated Open Space System (IOSS) has not yet been implemented. Although the SDF 2019 identifies open space networks and green corridors for future planning, there is no evidence of on the ground execution, and the areas currently lack formal parks, recreational spaces, or structured green corridors. Existing open spaces are mostly informal and underutilized, meaning the IOSS remains a planning proposal awaiting coordinated implementation alongside infrastructure and mixed-use development.

3.4.6.3 Cemetery Upgrade

The cemeteries in Makonde/Khubvi/Mukula node have not yet been upgraded. They lack proper infrastructure, maintenance, and management, and municipal plans for their improvement are still pending.

3.4.6.4 Multipurpose Community Centre

A Thusong Centre (MPCC) was proposed for Makonde Village to provide social, educational, and municipal services but has not yet been built

3.4.6.5 Challenges

a. Infrastructure and Services

The node has limited access to water, sanitation, and electricity, poor road networks and stormwater management, and inadequate social amenities including schools, clinics, and recreational facilities.

b. Housing and Settlement

The node faces land tenure disputes between traditional authorities and municipal planners and experiences unplanned residential growth outside designated zones.

c. Economic Challenges

The node depends heavily on subsistence agriculture and informal trade, with limited local investment and poor market access for small businesses.





d. Social Services

The node experiences overcrowded and under resourced schools and clinics, as well as a shortage of community centers, youth facilities, and recreational spaces.

e. Environmental Concerns

The node faces flooding risks from poor drainage, land degradation and soil erosion, and a shortage of designated open or green spaces.

f. Governance and Institutional Issues

The node suffers from weak coordination between traditional authorities and the municipal government, limited budgets and slow project approvals, and difficulties in implementing planned developments such as mixed-use areas, cemeteries, and community centers.

3.4.6.6 Opportunities

a. Economic Opportunities

Agricultural development and agro-processing due to prevalent subsistence farming, growth and formalization of small businesses and informal trade, and leveraging proximity to regional roads or the strategic link (e.g., P277/1) to enhance trade and logistics.

b. Infrastructure and Service Expansion

Planned mixed-use developments to attract investment and enhance service delivery, upgrading cemeteries, community centers, and recreational facilities,

and improving water, sanitation, and electricity networks to support residential and commercial growth.

c. Social and Community Development

The establishment of Multipurpose Community Centres (MPCC/Thusong Centres) for education, skills development, and social cohesion, the development of green spaces and integrated open space systems to improve quality of life, and the chance to strengthen community engagement and participatory planning.

d. Environmental and Spatial Planning

Sustainable land use and conservation initiatives, such as flood control and soil erosion mitigation, and the development of eco-tourism or cultural heritage attractions that leverage the area's natural landscapes and local culture.

e. Governance and Institutional Strengthening

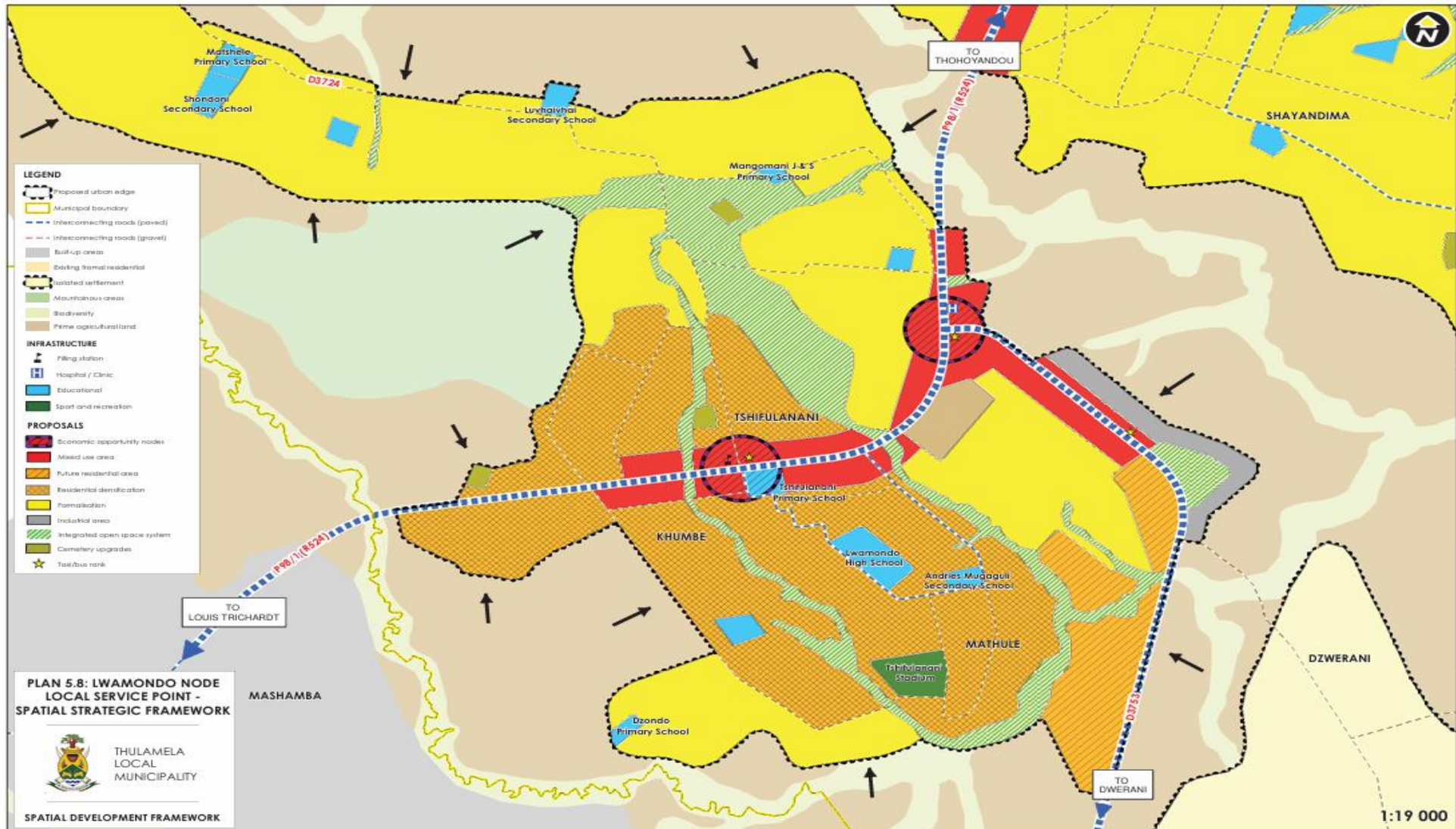
Enhancing governance coordination, guiding development through structured planning, and leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) for improved infrastructure and service.





3.4.7 Lwamondo/Tshisaulu - Local Service Centre

Figure 21: Lwamondo/Tshisaulu: Local Service Centre





Lwamondo/Tshisaulu was identified as a Local Service Point, currently identified as a Local Service Centre. The cadastral structure and layout of the Lwamondo node consists of a combination of surveyed and un-surveyed settlements.

While there is a clearly defined or dominant activity node (Mixed-use) in the area, with various economic activities occurring along the R524 the provincial freight corridor and D3750/D3753 intersection going to Dzwerani, Vuwani, and going towards MKLM along the R524 route which passes through the central part of Lwamondo.

Tshisaulu is a rural settlement that is not fully surveyed, with some form of economic activities (Mixed-use) also along the R524 intersection D5002. A few community services are offered by the node.

3.4.7.1 Residential Development

- Densification was encouraged within the densification zone to promote compaction of existing formal residential developments and this was proposed for areas like Khumbe, Tshifulanani Mathule, however residential developments is still of a medium density residential.
- Formalization and implementation of tenure upgrading and related projects were proposed however not much has been done in this regard as the are still land conflicts and disputes within this node.
- The residential character of the established formal residential areas is still preserved, unfortunately, further encroachment to prime agricultural land or high agriculture potential land should be prevented.

3.4.7.2 Mixed-Use Development

The mixed-used developments around this node are encouraging conflicting land uses as a mixture of businesses activities are clustered informally along the R524 the provincial freight corridor as per the LSDF, 2025.

3.4.7.3 Industrial Development

The area demarcated as “industrial zone” along D3753 is not really promoted as an industrial area in order to attract investments and create jobs, however the area is attracting various economic activities in the form of mixed-use and the industrial zoning is therefore compromised.

3.4.7.4 Open Space

Environmentally sensitive areas were earmarked for conservation purposes and the flood line areas along the water courses, however residential development has encroached to these integrated open spaces system.

3.4.7.5 Agriculture

- No restrictions within these areas as residential and mixed-use development are prevailing in these areas. Moreover, Sand mining or any other mining activity are taking place without any permits from the regulatory body.
- Lwamondo-Tshisaulu also forms part of the Agriculture and Farming Focus Area as highlighted in the LSDF, 2025 conceptual framework.





3.4.7.6 Challenges

- a) The provision of social/public and economic infrastructure.
- b) Restricting development in flood line areas along rivers, streams.
- c) Functional open spaces and protection of prime agricultural land.
- d) Sand mining permits still remain unregulated.
- e) Mushrooming of informal business along the provincial freight corridor R524 from Tshilidzini Hospital in Tshisaulu going to Lwamondo intersection D3753.

3.4.7.7 Opportunities

- a) Tenure upgrading in areas where the residents will be able to pay for municipal services.
- b) Regulated and monitored high density residential developments.
- c) Rural restructuring.
- d) Provision of paved or tarred access road and internal streets.
- e) Tapping into the tourism potential offered by this node

3.4.7.7 Proposed Road Linkages

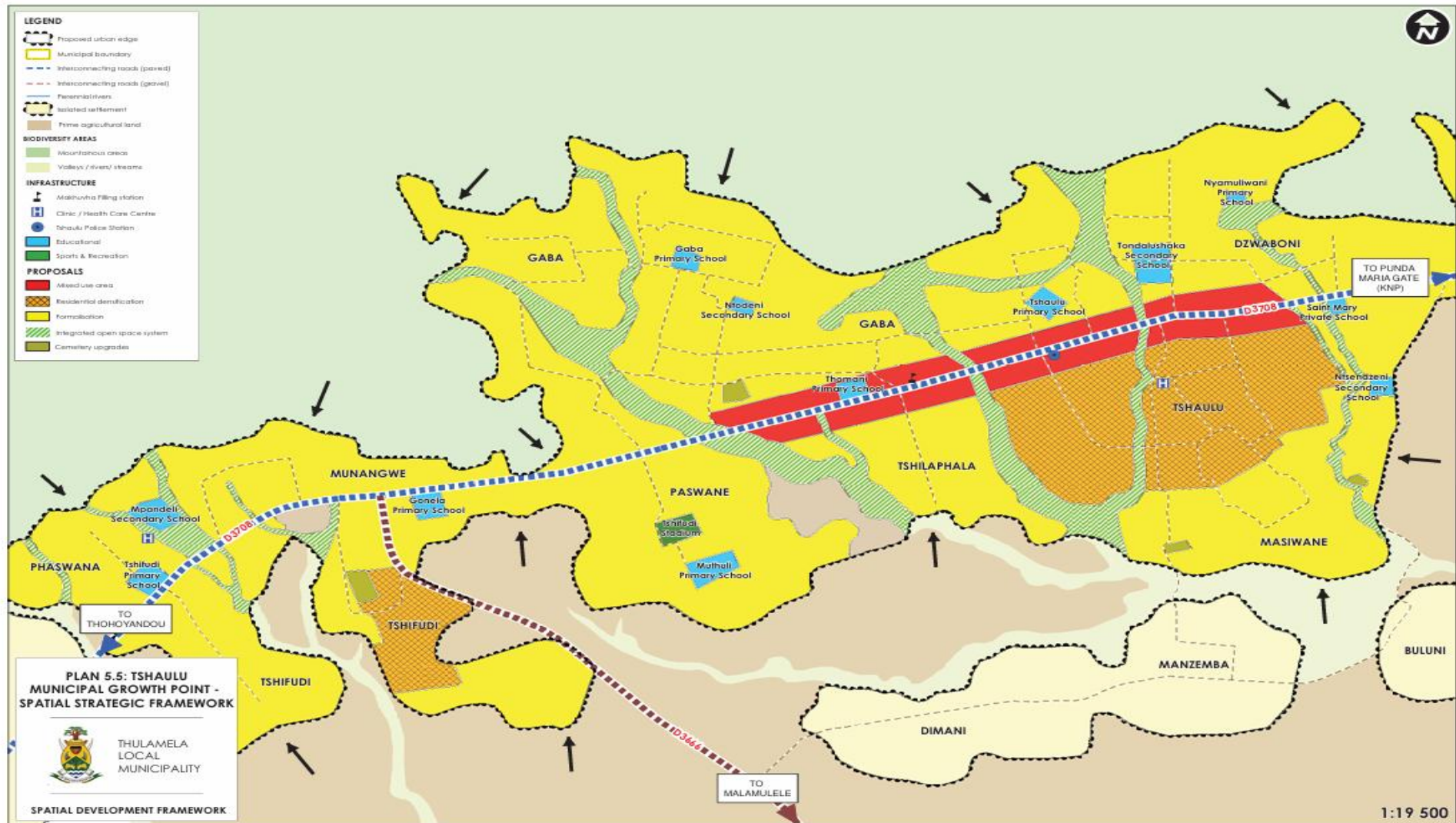
The proposal of having double lanes from Tshilidzini Hospital to the D3753 and the R524 has not materialised though originally the route in some sections has double lanes.





3.4.8 Tshaulu/Gaba/Tshifudi - Local Service Centre

Figure 22: Tshaulu/Gaba/Tshifudi - Local Service Centre





According to the LSDF, 2025 Tshaulu was identified as a Local Service Point, currently identified as a Local Service Centre. Moreover, Tshaulu also forms part of the Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition Areas, the Agriculture and Farming Focus Area as well as the Environment and Tourism Focus Area.

Tshaulu is situated along the northern access route D3708 that intersect with the Strategic link the P277-1 in Mukula which forms part of the Makonde, Mukula and Khubvi nodal point.

The northern surrounding areas are predominantly made up of the rural residential component from Tshifudi, Gaba to Tshaulu.

3.4.8.1 Residential Development

Implementation of tenure upgrade and housing projects as first priority in the formalization zone still remains a challenge as well as the proposed densification within the mixed-use zone.

3.4.8.2 Mixed Use Development

The defined mixed-use area along the road D3708 has the highest potential for economic development within the node and the enabling infrastructure or economic infrastructure still remains a challenge.

3.4.8.3 Open Space

The protection of public open space and the 1 in 100 flood line areas along the river channels and water courses are still not considered to be part of the integrated open space system in Tshaulu.

3.4.8.4 Agriculture and Tourism

Land uses within this zone were supposed be restricted to agricultural and tourism activities and uses ancillary and complementary thereto, especially looking at the scenic views from the mountains as well as the cave within the mountains in Tshaulu.

3.4.8.5 Challenges

- a) Informal business and economic activities mushrooming in the area designated as mixed-use.
- b) The provision of public/social and economic infrastructure.
- c) Restricting development in flood line areas along rivers, streams.
- d) Open spaces management.
- e) Protection of prime agricultural land.
- f) Sand mining permits still remains a challenge.

3.4.8.6 Opportunities

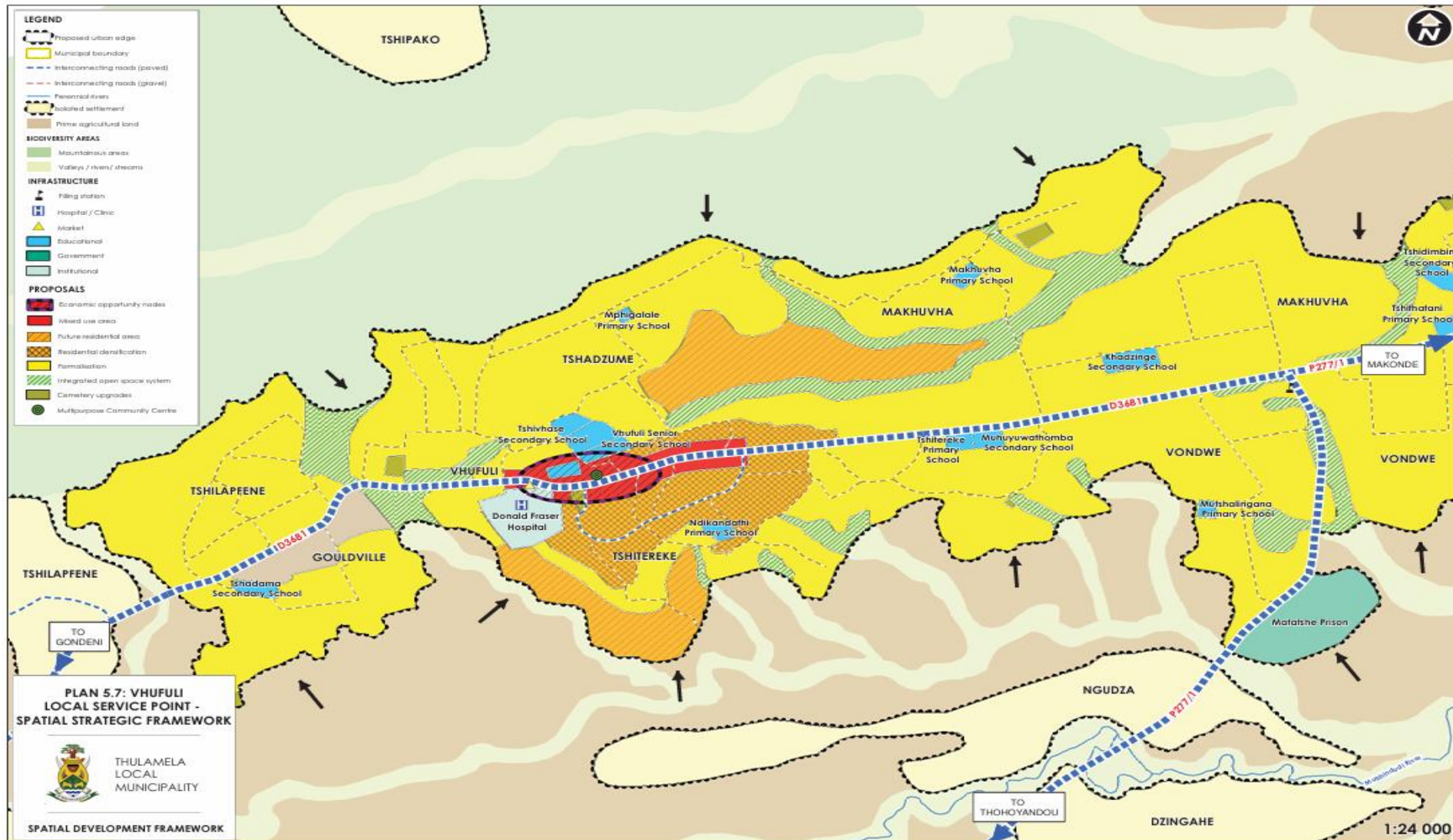
- a) Tenure upgrading in areas where the residents will be able to pay for municipal services.
- b) Rural restructuring.
- c) Access Road upgrading and provision of tarred or paved internal streets in the areas close to the mixed-use designated zone.
- d) Tapping into the tourism potential brought about the mountains and footprints on top of the mountain which is also part of the areas historical or cultural perspective.





3.4.9 Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe – Local Service Centre

Figure 23: Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe – Local Service Centre





Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe was identified as a Local Service Point, currently identified as a Local Service Centre. Along route D3681, near Donald Fraser Hospital which is also along the Prioritised Tourism routes according to the LSDF, 2025.

Vondwe is located at an intersection that connects to Vhufuli, Tshilamba and Thohoyandou, including their surrounding villages along the P277-1 and consists of several economic activities as well as informal economic activities.

Tshitereke is one of the formal towns in this node and connected to adjacent villages with a few community services are offered by this node.

3.4.9.1 Residential Development

Formalization and tenure upgrading projects still remains a challenge in this node as nothing has been done thus far and the provision and upgrading of economic infrastructure as listed in the IDP still remains a challenge as a result of policy and budget.

3.4.9.2 Mixed Use Development

The highest economic potential is offered by the area designated as mixed-used where formal and informal business activities occur, and the enabling economic infrastructure remains a critical challenge.

3.4.9.3 Agriculture

This node is surrounded by prime agricultural land and is also part of the Agriculture and Farming Focus Area as highlighted in the LSDF, 2025

Conceptual Framework, however residential developments have encroached into these prime lands hence the decline in agricultural production.

Illegal sand mining or any other mining activity are taking place without necessary consents from the Department of Minerals and Energy and this also make it difficult to manage and preserve open spaces within the node.

3.4.9.4 Challenges

- a) Restricting development in flood line areas along rivers, streams.
- b) The provision of social and economic infrastructure.
- c) Functional open spaces and protection of prime agricultural land.
- d) Informal business mushrooming along the area designated for mixed use.

3.4.9.5 Opportunities

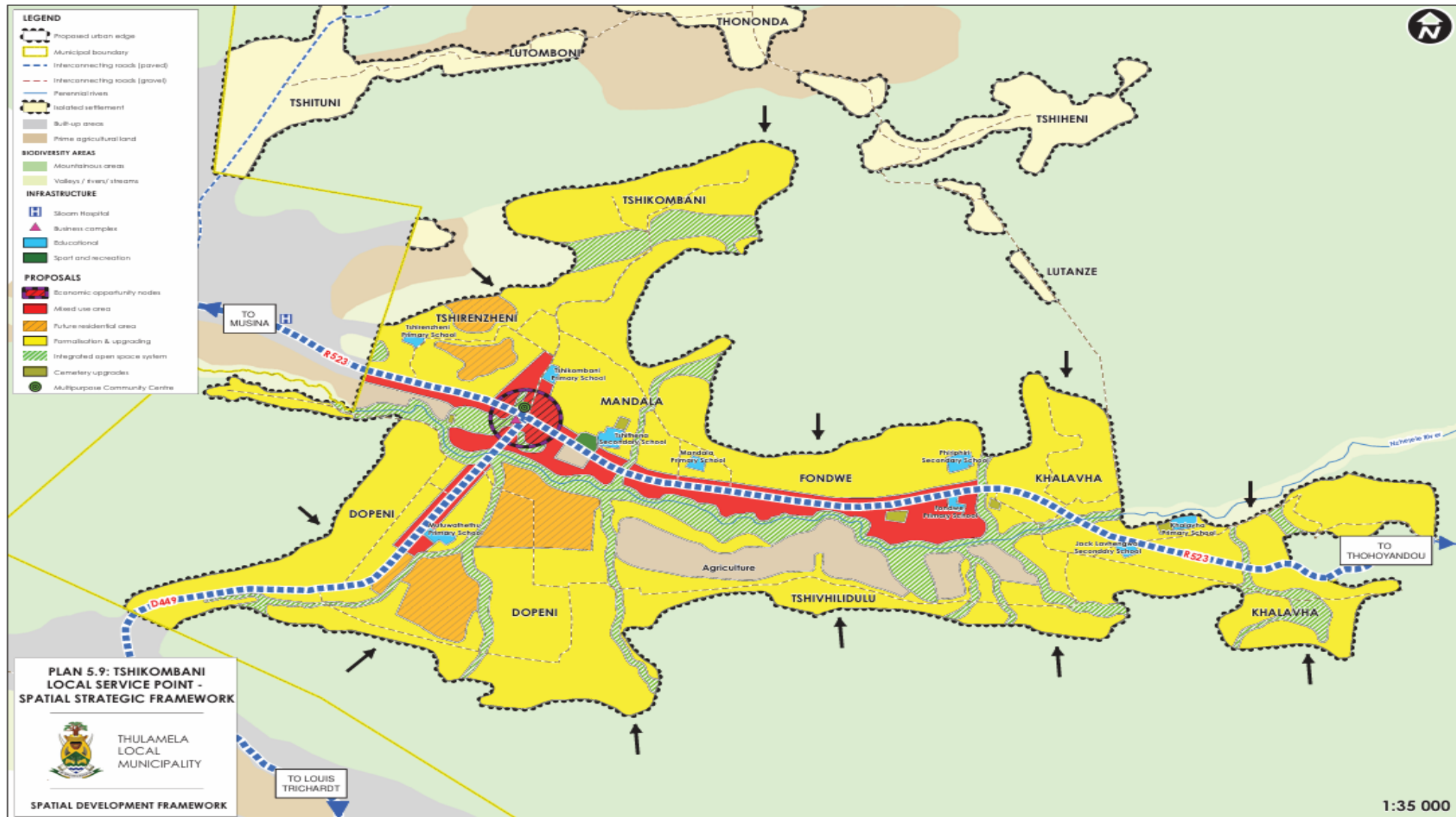
- a) Tenure upgrading.
- b) Rural restructuring.
- c) Access Road upgrading from gravel to tar.
- d) Provision of economic infrastructure as an enabler for residential, economic industrial development





3.4.10 Tshikombani - Local Service Centre

Figure 24: Tshikombani - Local Service Centre





Tshikombani was identified as a Local Service Point, currently identified as a Local Service Centre. This node is situated at the far western edge of the TLM and borders MKLM and forms part of the areas designated as Spatial Transformation and Economic Transition Area and also part of the Environment and Tourism Focus Area.

Although there is some level of spatial planning characterizing the villages within the node, the area does not contain any formalised township developments.

It further enjoys good regional access with route R523 the provincial main road network and D449 linking TLM with MLM as well as MKLM.

Key activities in this node include a retail facility positioned in the south-western quadrant of the intersection and a taxi rank located to the east of it. Further east along route R523, there is a Tshikombani sports stadium, several schools, a filling station and hardwares.

Tshikombani has upgraded its main intersection with a completed high-mast light installation, improving safety for residents. The municipality continues to prioritise this infrastructure through future IDP funding.

3.4.10.1 Challenges

For this particular node challenges include the provision of social and economic infrastructure, restricting development in flood line areas along rivers, streams, functional open spaces and protection of prime agricultural land, Sand mining

permits and mushrooming of informal businesses as well as implementation challenges within the node's service delivery upgrades.

a. Lack of Precinct Plan Implementation:

- The planned Thusong Centres in Tshikombani were not implemented due to administrative and funding challenges.
- The designated area has since transitioned into mixed-use development, which is now supporting local economic activities and community self-empowerment in an informal manner.
- The roadside mixed-use development in Tshikombani is easily accessible, and population threshold guidelines (CSIR) may have influenced the decision not to build the planned Thusong Centres.
- Residents instead use nearby facilities such as Siloam Hospital, local clinics, and the Siloam police station

b. Restricting Development

- In Tshikombani, agricultural land, particularly opposite the Dopeni Bridge and along the D449, is increasingly being converted to residential and mixed-use developments, including commercial outlets and informal activities such as sand mining.
- This encroachment is exacerbated by land underutilization due to family disputes and weak enforcement of land-use regulations.
- The trend threatens agricultural sustainability and undermines this nodal point orderly spatial planning.





c. Mushrooming of informal business

- Along the R523 in Tshikombani, informal businesses are rapidly expanding, driven by socio-economic factors such as unemployment and limited access to formal employment opportunities.
- Residents have established roadside stalls to sell food and clothing as a survival strategy, reflecting the need for integrated planning that accommodates informal economic activities while ensuring road safety and orderly land use.
- To manage informal businesses, TLM should encourage formalization by allocating designated, accessible trading zones and providing support through partnerships with organizations like the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA).
- Informal traders should be registered, issued low-cost permits, and trained on health, safety, and environmental compliance, promoting orderly land use and sustainable economic activity.

d. Less Utilised Taxi-Rank

- Tshikombani taxi rank is underused due to poor regulation, management, and operator conflicts, leading residents to prefer the more reliable Siloam Taxi Rank 2 km away.
- Usage can be improved by establishing a management committee and enforcing permits, routes, and the 2020 Taxi Industry Regulation.

e. Loading and Off-Loading Zone

In Tshikombani, hardware stores like Smart Build and Ashrafi face loading and off-loading challenges due to proximity to the road, inadequate turning space, road reserve encroachment, and resulting traffic delays. This is mainly due to the fact that Tshikombani does not have a formal light industrial area and the industrial area or hardware's are located in areas designated as mixed-use areas.

3.4.10.2 Opportunities

a. Street Upgrading

- The strip shops opposite Juicy Complex need upgraded street trading facilities, including paved areas and proper drainage, to ensure accessibility during rainy conditions.
- All roads within the node should be upgraded with paving or tar, signage, and eco-friendly pedestrian walkways to improve traffic flow, safety, and stormwater management.

b. Development of Green Economy Projects

- Green economy projects in Tshikombani can address infrastructure challenges and attract investment, with active community involvement.
- Key initiatives include rainwater tanks, waste recycling facilities, and alternative sanitation technologies.





c. Protection of Tshirenzheni Ridge

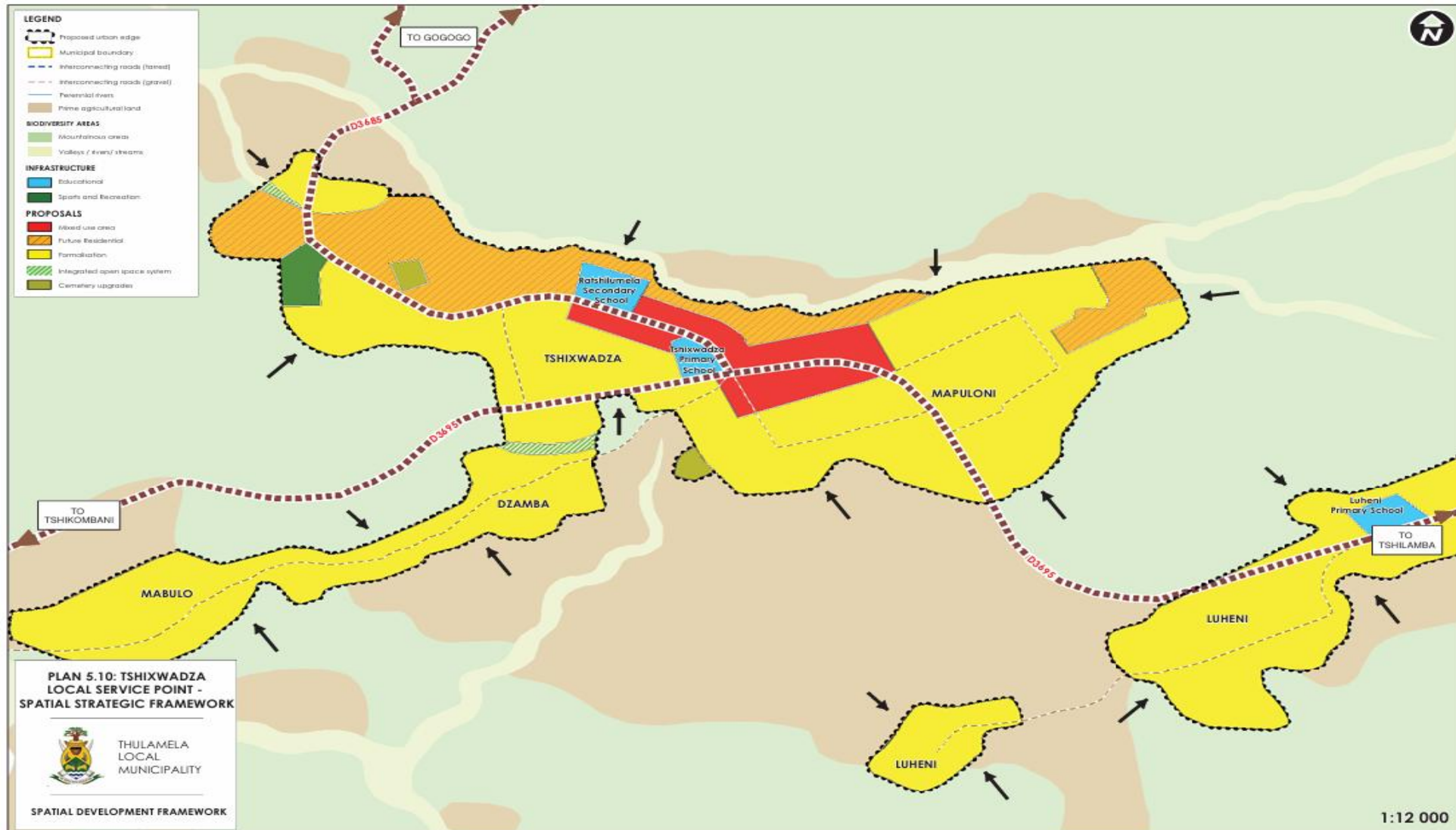
- Ridges act as ecological corridors supporting biodiversity, and building on them can reduce species and increase erosion and runoff, threatening downstream communities like Tshirenzheni.
- The ridge can be protected by enforcing zoning laws and designating it as a protected area, with public participation from Tshirenzheni residents and traditional leaders to incorporate indigenous knowledge.





3.4.11 Tshixwadza - Local Service Centre

Figure 25: Tshixwadza - Local Service Centre





Tshixwadza was identified as a Local Service Point, currently identified as a Local Service Centre. Tshixwadza is a settlement situated 64 km away from Thohoyandou positioned on a ridge between deep valleys, along road D3695 which is also identified by the LSDF, 2025 as one of the Prioritised Tourism Routes from Tshithuthuni/Siloam intersection on the R523 the provincial main road network that runs through the Tshixwadza to Dzimauli and Tshilamba branches off to nearby rural villages/settlements in the valley below. Surrounding the elongated settlement are large areas of agricultural land extending towards the valleys.

3.4.11.1 Challenges

- a) The provision of social and economic infrastructure.
- b) Restricting development in flood line areas along rivers, streams, functional open spaces and protection of prime agricultural land.
- c) Sand mining permits.

3.4.11.2 Opportunities

a) Road Upgrading:

All roads within the node should be upgraded with paving or tar, signage, and eco-friendly pedestrian walkways to improve traffic flow, safety, and stormwater management.

b) Development of Green Economy Projects

Green economy projects in Tshixwadza can address economic infrastructure challenges and attract investments, with active community involvement. Key

initiatives include rainwater tanks, waste recycling facilities, and alternative sanitation technologies.

c) Tenure upgrading,

d) Low density residential developments,

e) Tourism potential as it forms part of the Environment and Tourism Focus Area as outlined in the LSDF, 2025.

f) Protection of Ridges:

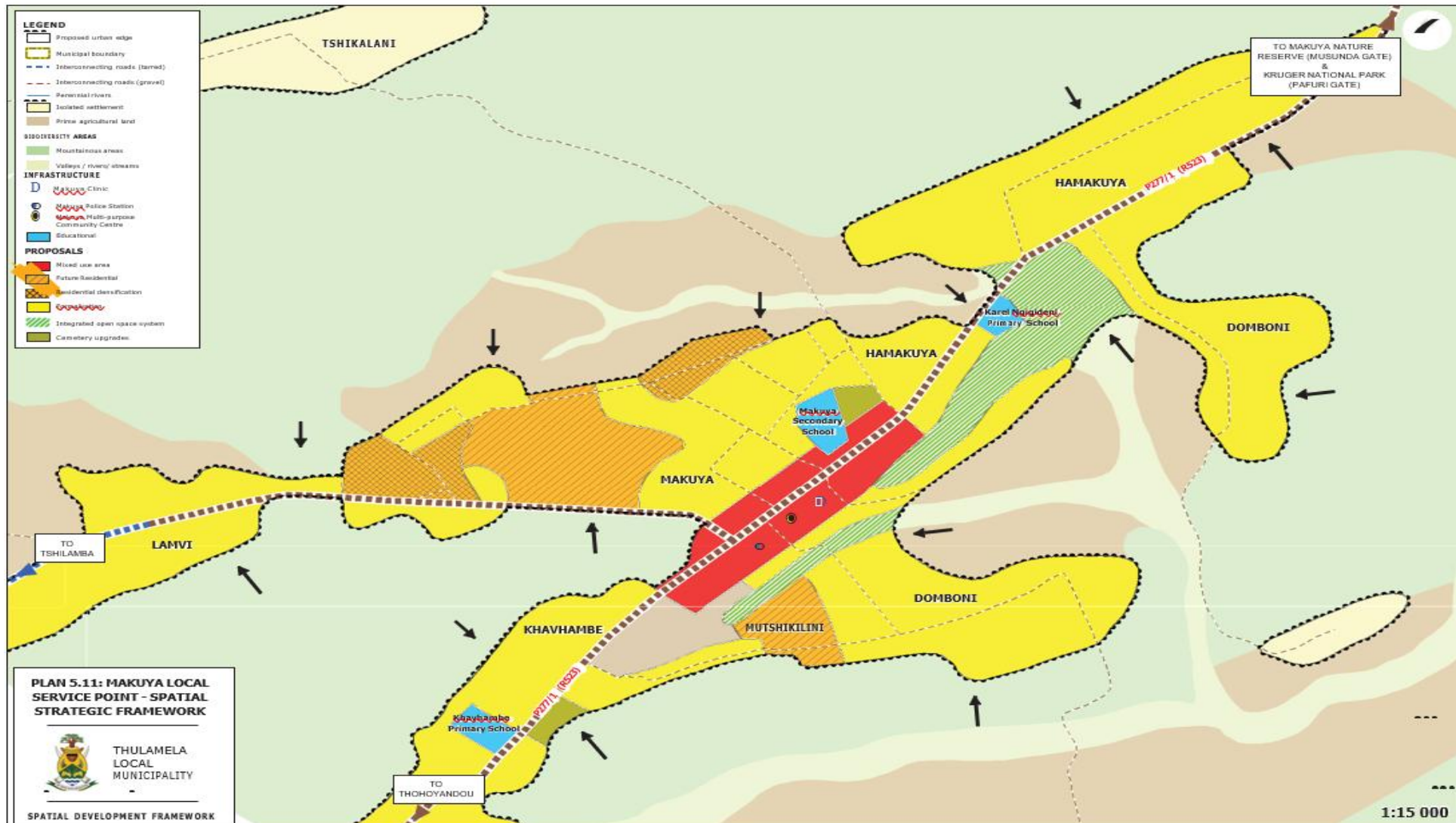
- Ridges act as ecological corridors supporting biodiversity, and building on them can reduce species and increase erosion and runoff, threatening downstream communities.
- The ridge can be protected by enforcing zoning laws and designating it as a protected area, with public participation from Tshixwadza residents and traditional leaders to incorporate indigenous knowledge.





3.4.12 Makuya - Local Service Centre

Figure 26: Makuya - Local Service Centre





Makuya was identified as a Local Service Point, currently identified as a Local Service Centre and is along the Strategic Link the P277/1 according to the LSDF, 2025. Makuya Nature Reserve lies to the east of the Ha-Makuya node. The node is mainly characterized by informal settlements although some form of formality is depicted in the general layout of the settlements.

3.4.12.1 Future Residential

Future Residential areas in Makuya Village are zones earmarked for residential development to meet projected housing demand.

3.4.12.2 Residential Densification

Existing residential areas still follow low-density development patterns, and no formal measures or projects promoting densification have been rolled out to date.

3.4.12.3 Formalisation

Formalisation in Makuya Village is still outstanding. The settlement continues to develop informally, with no approved township layout, surveyed erven, or formal land-use rights. As a result, basic services, infrastructure provision, and orderly spatial development remain constrained.

3.4.12.4 Integrated Open Space System

Makuya Village contains several natural and communal open spaces, including riverine areas, grazing fields, and informal green spaces. However, these areas currently function independently and are not integrated into a formalised Open Space System.

There is no structured network of ecological corridors, recreational parks, or protected buffers. As a result, the development of a coordinated Integrated Open Space System (IOSS) remains a key opportunity to enhance environmental sustainability, recreation, and climate resilience within the village.

3.4.12.5 Cemetery Upgrade

The site is currently affected by capacity limitations, inadequate fencing, poor access roads, and insufficient maintenance. These conditions compromise safety, accessibility, and overall functionality.

3.4.12.6 Challenges

a. Weak Economic Base

- Limited formal economic activities within the node.
- Dependence on subsistence agriculture and informal trade.
- Underutilisation of opportunities from P277/1 as a strategic link and tourism flows to Makuya Nature Reserve.

b. Environmental Constraints

- Encroachment of settlements into environmentally sensitive and flood-prone areas.
- Land degradation along rivers due to unsustainable farming.
- Risks associated with sand mining.





c. Agricultural Productivity Challenges

- Small-scale farmers face limited access to markets, inputs, and irrigation infrastructure.
- Environmental sustainability concerns (erosion, over-cultivation).

d. Poor Road and Transport Linkages

- Many road connections are informal, degraded, or unmaintained.
- Limited public transport infrastructure, affecting mobility and economic integration.

e. Spatial Fragmentation

- Separation between residential areas and economic nodes, limiting integration and access to opportunities.
- Lack of a strong, structured mixed-use core.

f. Insufficient Infrastructure and Social Facilities

g. Inadequate water, sanitation, electricity, and road networks.

3.4.12.7 Opportunities

a. Residential Development

Formalising existing settlements and developing Future Residential zones can improve service delivery, living conditions, and create construction-related jobs, while promoting orderly growth and reducing sprawl.

b. Mixed-Use Development

The P277/1 corridor offers potential as an economic hub for retail, hospitality, tourism, and service businesses, strengthened by proximity to Makuya Nature Reserve and eco-tourism opportunities.

c. Open Space & Environment

Protecting rivers, streams, and conservation areas can support recreation, green corridors, environmental education, and conservation-related employment.

d. Agriculture

High-potential areas allow for commercial and small-scale farming, irrigated crops, agro-processing, and regulated sand mining, promoting food security and local employment.

f. Transportation & Connectivity

Upgrading road networks, taxi, and bus routes enhances regional connectivity, access to markets, and supports broader economic development.





3.5 Extensive Land Use Analysis (Land Administration)

3.5.1 Land Tenure

Land tenure refers to the system through which land is owned, occupied, accessed, and managed, and it is a critical determinant of spatial development patterns within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). The municipality exhibits a land tenure structure dominated by traditional authority areas, with comparatively limited formally registered urban land and a small number of commercial farms. This tenure profile has a direct influence on settlement form, infrastructure provision, land use management, and long-term spatial transformation.

TLM comprises approximately 134 200 hectares of traditional land, 22 374 hectares of urban land, and only 22 registered farms. Land tenure categories within the municipality include rented land (approximately 8 251 hectares), land that is owned but not fully paid for (approximately 6 630 hectares), occupied land without formal ownership (approximately 38 749 hectares), and fully paid, registered ownership (approximately 102 522 hectares), with a small residual portion classified as other tenure forms (approximately 712 hectares). This distribution reflects a predominance of informal or semi-formal tenure arrangements, particularly within rural villages under traditional leadership.

A significant spatial challenge associated with this tenure system is that the majority of the approximately 400 dispersed villages within TLM do not have approved General Plans. The absence of surveyed and registered layouts limits formal land administration, constrains development control, and

complicates the provision of bulk and internal infrastructure. It also restricts the municipality's ability to guide densification, manage land use rights, and implement spatial restructuring objectives in line with the SDF.

Table 16: Land Tenure

Rent	8251
Owned but not yet Paid Off	6630
Occupied	38479
Owned and Fully Paid	102522
Other	712

Source: TLM IDP Review 2025/26 – 2027/28

✚ Legislative and Policy Framework:

Land tenure and land administration within Thulamela are informed by a range of national and provincial legislative and policy instruments, including:

- ✚ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Sections 25 and 26): Provides the basis for secure tenure, equitable access to land, and the progressive realisation of housing rights.
 - Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires municipalities to promote spatial justice, spatial sustainability, and efficiency, particularly in areas characterised by insecure or informal tenure.





- Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (2003): Recognises the role of traditional authorities in land allocation and governance within customary areas.
- Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act (IPILRA, 1996): Protects informal and customary land rights against arbitrary deprivation.
- Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights Act (ULTRA, 1991): Provides mechanisms for the formalisation and upgrading of certain tenure rights.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Emphasises tenure security, land reform, and integrated rural development as foundations for inclusive growth.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies insecure land tenure as a structural constraint to spatial transformation and infrastructure investment.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025- 2030): Prioritise tenure upgrading, improved land administration, and structured rural settlement development within traditional authority areas.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality SDF Review:

- Settlement Planning and Spatial Structuring: The dominance of unsurveyed traditional land necessitates a strategic focus on the preparation and approval of General Plans to support orderly settlement development, densification, and the identification of serviceable development footprints.

- Infrastructure Provision: Insecure tenure and the absence of formal land registration increase the cost and complexity of infrastructure delivery, underscoring the need for coordinated land administration and infrastructure planning.
- Land Use Management: Limited formal land use rights constrain the municipality's ability to enforce land use controls and implement the Land Use Scheme effectively, particularly within rural villages.
- Tenure Security and Socio-Economic Development: Improving tenure security is essential to unlocking household investment, supporting housing consolidation, and enabling access to finance and government housing programmes.
- Intergovernmental and Traditional Authority Coordination: Effective implementation of the SDF requires structured collaboration between the municipality, traditional authorities, the provincial department responsible for land administration, and national land reform institutions.
- Spatial Transformation: Addressing land tenure constraints is fundamental to advancing spatial justice, reducing informality, and aligning rural settlement patterns with long-term development and service delivery objectives.

3.5.2 Land Claims

Land restitution is a significant spatial and institutional consideration within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), given the presence of multiple land claims lodged on communal land, tribal authority areas, and selected farm portions.





These claims reflect historical dispossession and continue to influence land ownership patterns, land administration processes, and the timing and feasibility of development initiatives across the municipality.

Land claims within TLM vary in status and extent and are administered through the Office of the Regional Land Claims Commissioner: Limpopo. Claims affect both rural settlements under traditional authority and portions of commercially registered land, introducing varying degrees of uncertainty with regard to land rights, development approvals, and long-term land use planning. Where claims remain unresolved, they can place constraints on investment, delay infrastructure roll-out, and limit the municipality's ability to implement spatial proposals contained in the SDF.

From a spatial perspective, land claims often coincide with areas of development pressure, including expanding villages, agricultural land, and land with potential for settlement consolidation or economic development. The outcome of restitution processes, whether restoration of land, financial compensation, or alternative land allocation, has direct implications for settlement form, land use patterns, and service delivery planning within TLM.

Table 17, highlights the land claims status within the Thulamela Local Municipality:





Table 17: Land Claims

Property/Farm Name	Claimant(s)	KRP(s)	Claim Status
1. Makuya 398 MT	Mabasa M.M & other individuals Mashamba RW	1946 9147	Settled
2. Paswane 257 MT	Ndlovu SD Ngobeni SD	9166 9660	Settled
3. Vogelenzang 3 MT	Vhaleha Tribe	10670	Research Report Approved
4. Mangundi 279 MT	Maswanganyi m Tibane W.H	2612 3506	Settled
5. Ramputa's Location 196 MT	Mphephu N.W & other individuals Netilili TJ	10621/others 11454	Settled Land Court
6. Sendedzane 200 MT	Netshithuthuni Comm Tswime Comm Tshithuthuni Comm	346 5338/1781 11187	Dismissed
7. Tengwe 255 MT	Makamu M & Other Individuals	3091/Other	Settled
8. Mpapuli 278 MT	Chauke RE & Other Individuals	9251/Others	Settled
9. Chibase 213 MT	Khubvi Community & others Makumbani Comm Murangani Comm Matondoni Comm	364/Others 377 359 & Others 352	Settled Research Report Approved Research Report Approved Dismissed
10. Mondale 197 MT	Makanga Comm Rathogwa G.M	359 1747	Research Report Approved
11. Lomondo 252 MT	Masina ME & other individuals	9165/others	Settled





Property/Farm Name	Claimant(s)	KRP(s)	Claim Status
12. Dzwerani 22 LT	Dzwerani Land Claim	3720	Dismissed
	Makhubele TW	5330	Settled
	Mugivhi Royal Authorities	5331/1665	Settled
13. Tatevondo Forest 214 MT	Vhelufokhamuvo Cluster	11102/390	Research Report Approved
14. Vredenburg 266 MT	Chauke GM	2893	Dismissed
	Makaringi MC & Others	2850/Others	Settled
15. Georgenholtz 256 MT	Mandlazi ME & other Individuals	8123/Others	Settled
16. Tshibielwe 268 MT	Tshififi Community & Others	364/Others	Settled
17. Shapela 269 MT	Makhuvele KV	8986	Settled
18. Trust 381 MT	Baloyi M	2876	Settled

Source: Office of the Regional Land Claims Commissioner: Limpopo

Legislative and Policy Framework:

The management and resolution of land claims within TLM are guided by the following legislative and policy instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 25): Provides the constitutional basis for land restitution and equitable access to land.
- Restitution of Land Rights Act (1994): Establishes the legal framework for lodging, investigating, and resolving land claims arising from historical dispossession.
- Interim Protection of Informal Land Rights Act (IPILRA, 1996): Protects informal and customary land rights during restitution and land reform processes.





- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires municipalities to consider land tenure and restitution constraints when preparing spatial plans and making land use decisions.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Identifies land restitution and tenure reform as key components of inclusive rural development and social justice.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Recognises unresolved land claims as a structural constraint to spatial transformation and coordinated infrastructure investment.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025 - 2030): Emphasise the need to align land restitution outcomes with settlement planning, agricultural development, and infrastructure provision.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality SDF Review:

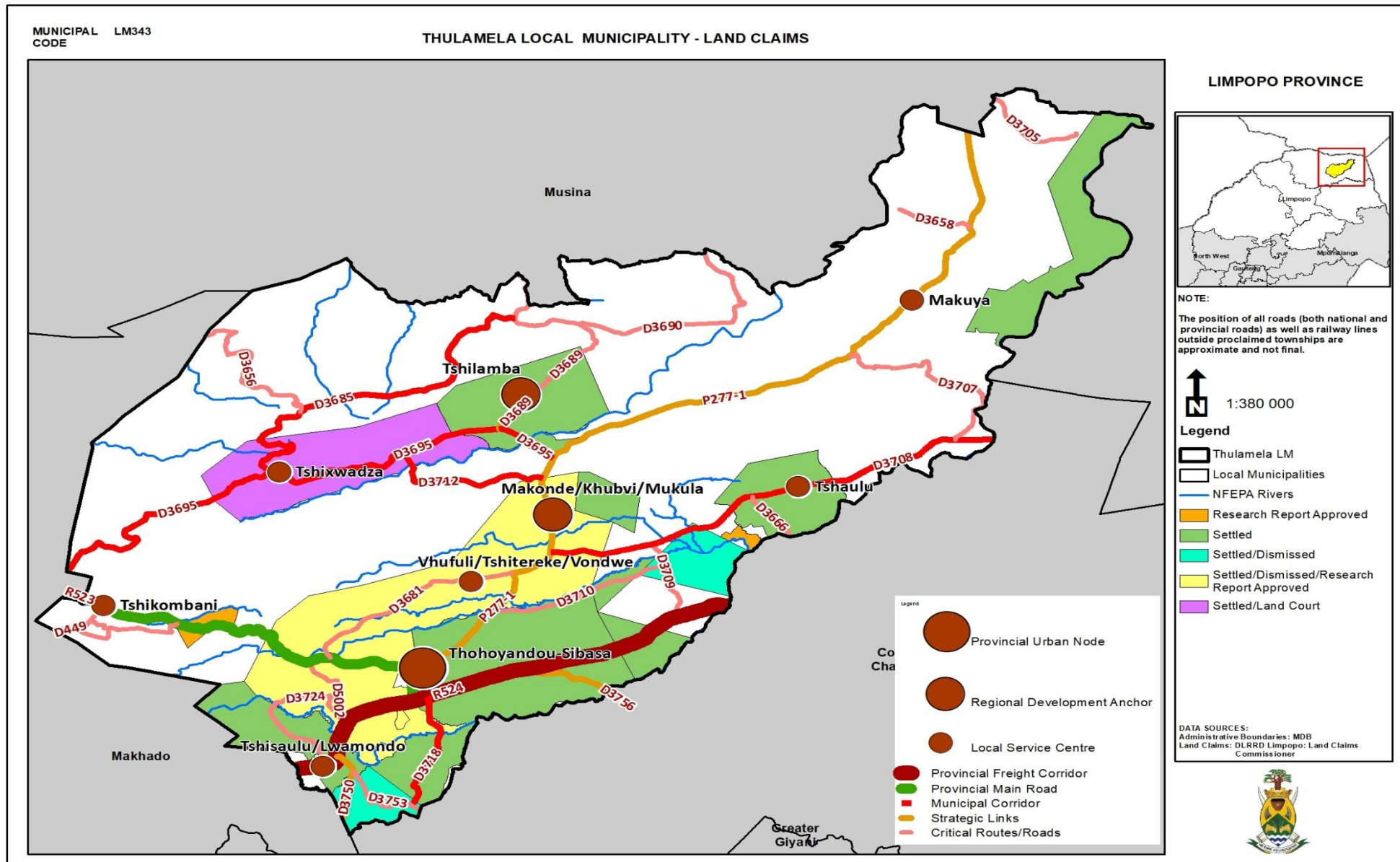
- Spatial Planning Certainty: Areas affected by unresolved land claims require cautious spatial planning, with development proposals phased or conditional to avoid conflicts with restitution outcomes.
- Infrastructure Investment: Infrastructure planning and capital investment should be coordinated with the status of land claims to minimise the risk of sunk costs in areas where land ownership remains uncertain.

- Settlement Development: Restitution outcomes may result in changes to settlement boundaries, land use rights, or land management arrangements, which must be incorporated into future revisions of the SDF and Land Use Scheme.
- Agricultural and Economic Development: Claims affecting farm portions and communal agricultural land can influence agricultural production, land access, and local economic development initiatives, particularly where post-settlement support is limited.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: Effective alignment between the municipality, the Regional Land Claims Commission, provincial departments, and traditional authorities is essential to ensure that restitution outcomes support sustainable spatial development.
- Post-Settlement Planning: Where land claims have been settled, proactive spatial planning is required to integrate restored land into municipal development frameworks, infrastructure plans, and service delivery programmes.





Map 25: Land Claims





3.5.3 Land Cover

The land cover profile of the municipality as of 2022 demonstrates a predominantly natural and rural character, with limited urbanisation and industrial development.

- The most extensive land cover category is Natural Wooded Land, which occupies approximately 181,271.55 hectares, translating to 68.34% of the total area. This indicates that the municipality is largely characterised by undisturbed or semi-natural vegetation, likely comprising indigenous forests, thickets, or savanna woodland ecosystems.
- This significant ecological footprint provides a strong foundation for conservation initiatives, eco-tourism development, and biodiversity protection. The Residential land cover makes up the second most extensive with 40,534.24 hectares (15.28%), highlighting existing human settlement footprints across the municipality.
- Fallow Lands & Old Fields also make up 7.57% of the total land cover, which reflects previously cultivated lands that are now lying uncultivated or abandoned. Their extent suggests a history of agricultural activity, land degradation, or changes in land ownership and use. These zones may represent opportunities for agricultural revitalisation, agroforestry, or targeted land reform interventions.
- Temporary Crops cover 3.04% and Planted Forest 2.99% These figures reflect ongoing land-based productive activities and the potential for expanding agricultural and forestry-based economies.

- Permanent Crops makes up 1.02% of the total land cover, this includes orchards or other long-term crop plantations, indicating a small but stable component of commercial or subsistence agriculture.

- Urban and economic infrastructure occupies a relatively small share of the total land area, with commercial making up 0.08%, Industrial making up 0.02%, Transport Infrastructure making up 0.03%, Surface Infrastructure making up a very small amount of 3,75 hectares, and extraction Sites making up 0.02% of the total land cover within the municipality. This indicates that formal economic activity remains limited in various areas, and the municipality is predominantly rural, with only a small portion of the large built-up areas.

Table 18: Land cover within the TLM

Landcover Type	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)
Artificial Waterbodies	1,214.33	0.46%
Commercial	207.51	0.08%
Consolidated	53.92	0.02%
Extraction Sites	50.37	0.02%
Fallow Lands & Old Fields	20,071.40	7.57%
Herbaceous Wetlands	287.09	0.11%
Industrial	65.02	0.02%
Natural Grassland	1,817.45	0.69%





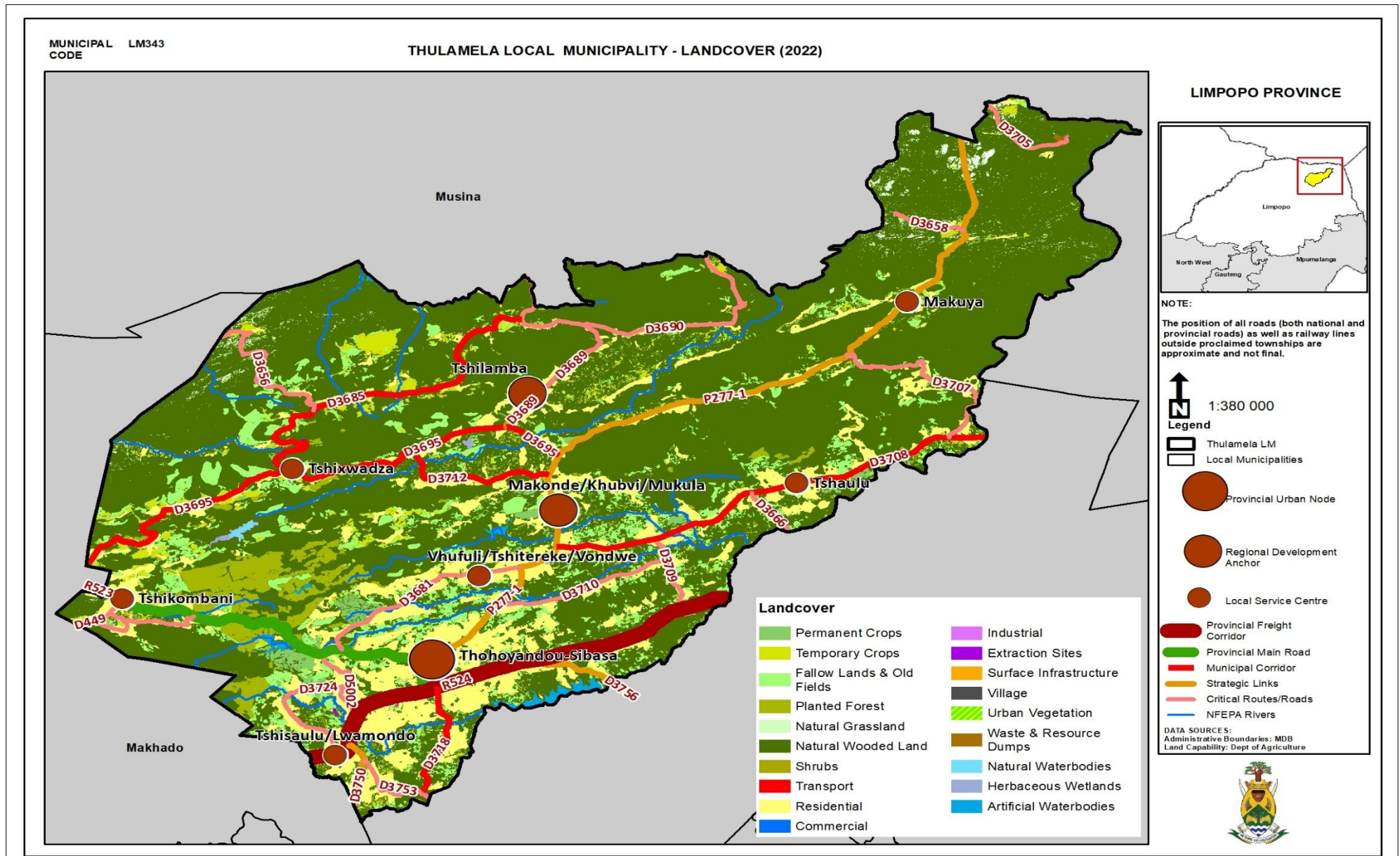
Landcover Type	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)
Natural Waterbodies	308.71	0.12%
Natural Wooded Land	181,271.55	68.34%
Permanent Crops	2,700.11	1.02%
Planted Forest	7,920.39	2.99%
Residential	40,534.24	15.28%
Shrubs	2.08	0.00%
Surface Infrastructure	3.75	0.00%
Temporary Crops	8,067.38	3.04%
Transport	68.32	0.03%
Unconsolidated	480.08	0.18%
Urban Vegetation	7.73	0.00%
Village	83.72	0.03%
Waste & Resource Dumps	45.18	0.02%
Total	265,260.33	100.00%

Source: South African National Land Cover 2022





Map 26: Landcover





3.5.4 Housing Profile

According to Stats SA, 2022, 96.4% are formal dwellings, while 2.8% are traditional dwellings of houses, informal dwellings 0.6% and other forms of dwelling types. According to the Thulamela Housing Sector Plan, the Backlog within the TLM has the following Housing Demands Estimate

Table 19: TLM Housing Backlog

Housing Type	Units
Traditional	21 072
Backyard Dwelling	812
Rental	1 500
Total Housing Backlog	24 776

Source: Current TLM Integrated Sustainable Housing Sector Plan

Spatial Implications on the Review of TLMSDF:

The spatial separation of formal urban housing from traditional and informal settlements creates disparities in access to services such as water, sanitation, electricity, and roads. Informal and traditional housing areas often experience service backlogs, complicating equitable municipal service delivery.

3.5.4.1 Dwelling Types

Dwelling types within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) reflect the municipality's predominantly rural settlement structure, land tenure arrangements, and historical patterns of development. Housing typologies can broadly be categorised into formal, informal, and traditional dwellings, each

of which carries distinct implications for land use management, infrastructure provision, and spatial transformation.

Formal dwellings include detached houses on individual stands, flats or apartments, townhouses, backyard rooms, and secondary dwelling units or flatlets. According to Statistics South Africa (Census 2022), formal dwellings account for approximately 96.4% of the housing stock within TLM. This high proportion reflects ongoing incremental formalisation of housing, particularly within established villages and urban areas, even where tenure arrangements may remain informal or customary in nature.

Traditional dwellings, consisting primarily of structures built using traditional materials such as clay and other locally sourced materials, represent approximately 2.8% of dwellings. These dwelling forms remain prevalent in parts of the municipality where cultural practices, affordability constraints, and customary land tenure continue to shape settlement patterns. While such dwellings often support social cohesion and cultural continuity, they may present challenges in terms of compliance with building standards, access to services, and long-term settlement consolidation.

Informal dwellings, including shacks and makeshift structures, constitute a relatively small proportion of the housing stock at approximately 0.6%. Although limited in scale compared to metropolitan contexts, the presence of informal dwellings signals localised housing pressures, particularly in proximity to economic opportunities, service nodes, and urban centres. Other dwelling types make up a marginal proportion of the total housing profile.





The spatial distribution of dwelling types across TLM is closely linked to land tenure patterns, availability of serviced land, and the absence of approved General Plans in many rural settlements. This results in dispersed settlement forms, low densities, and limited opportunities for efficient infrastructure provision and public transport integration

Table 20: Dwelling typology spread throughout the TLM

Name	Number of Dwellings	Percentage
Formal dwellings	137 427	96.4%
Traditional dwellings	3996	2.8%
Informal dwellings	793	0.6%
Other	312	0.2%

Source: Stats SA, 2022

Legislative and Policy Framework:

The planning and management of dwelling types within Thulamela are informed by the following key policy and legislative instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 26): Establishes the right of access to adequate housing.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Promotes spatial justice, efficiency, and sustainability in human settlement development.
- Housing Act (1997): Provides the framework for housing development and the roles of national, provincial, and local government.

- Breaking New Ground Policy (BNG, 2004): Advocates for sustainable human settlements rather than isolated housing delivery.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Emphasises integrated, compact, and inclusive human settlements.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies settlement form, density, and access to services as critical drivers of spatial transformation.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) and Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025 - 2030): Prioritise structured settlement development, human settlement consolidation, and improved access to services in rural and urban areas.

Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality SDF Review:

- Settlement Consolidation: The dominance of formal dwellings within dispersed settlement patterns highlights the need to guide future housing development towards more compact, serviceable settlement footprints.
- Infrastructure Efficiency: Low-density and scattered dwelling patterns increase the cost of infrastructure provision, underscoring the importance of aligning housing delivery with identified nodes and service centres.
- Traditional Housing Areas: Planning interventions should recognise traditional dwelling forms while supporting gradual upgrading, improved building quality, and access to basic services.





- **Informal Settlement Management:** Although limited in extent, informal dwellings require proactive monitoring and, where necessary, incremental upgrading to prevent the emergence of larger informal settlements.
- **Land Use Management:** The prevalence of formal structures on land without approved layouts reinforces the need for tenure upgrading, General Plan preparation, and alignment between housing delivery and land use management systems.
- **Spatial Transformation:** Housing typologies should be used strategically to support spatial justice, improve access to economic opportunities, and reduce long-term service delivery backlogs in line with the SDF.

3.5.4.2 Priority Human Settlements and Housing Development Areas (PHSHDAs)

The Priority Human Settlements and Housing Development Areas (PHSHDAs) Programme was introduced in 2019 as a national spatial targeting instrument to accelerate housing delivery through coordinated intergovernmental planning and investment. The programme identifies and gazettes priority areas where housing development is used as a catalyst to restructure settlement patterns, improve access to opportunities, and fast-track the delivery of integrated and sustainable human settlements.

PHSHDAs are intended to move beyond isolated housing provision by promoting integrated planning, coordinated programme implementation, and alignment between housing, bulk infrastructure, social facilities, transport systems, and economic opportunities. In this context, housing delivery functions

as a spatial restructuring tool aimed at reversing fragmented settlement patterns and supporting inclusive urban and peri-urban growth.

At provincial level, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (2025) identifies eleven PHSHDAs across the province, including Polokwane, Greater Giyani, Greater Tzaneen, Feta Kgomo Tubatse, Musina, Makhado, Thulamela, Lephalale, and Thabazimbi. Within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM), the PHSHDA designation recognises Thohoyandou and its surrounding areas as a priority node for integrated human settlements development, reflecting its role as the primary urban and service centre within the municipality.

The PHSHDAs within TLM are largely located within the broader Thohoyandou settlement area and include Makwarela, Mutoti Village, Shayandima, Thohoyandou BA, Thohoyandou F, IA, J, K, L, M, N, P and S, as well as Tshilivho and Tswinga. These areas are targeted for mixed-use, higher-density, and multi-income development that supports spatial equity, social inclusion, and economic competitiveness. The designation acknowledges Thohoyandou's capacity to accommodate future population growth and urbanisation pressures while serving as a focal point for public and private sector investment.

In addition, the PHSHDA designation reflects the need to integrate human settlements development with environmental management and climate adaptation considerations. The programme seeks to balance improved urban access and service delivery with the protection of ecological assets, thereby supporting long-term sustainability and resilience within the municipal settlement system.





Legislative and Policy Framework

The planning and implementation of PSHDAs within Thulamela are informed by the following key instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 26): Establishes the right of access to adequate housing.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires spatial targeting, integration, and spatial justice in settlement development.
- Housing Act (1997): Provides the legislative framework for housing development and intergovernmental coordination.
- Breaking New Ground Policy (BNG, 2004): Promotes sustainable human settlements rather than housing-only delivery.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Advocates for compact, integrated, and inclusive human settlements.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies priority settlement nodes and spatial targeting as key levers for national spatial transformation.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025): Identifies Thohoyandou as a priority settlement node and supports PSHDAs as instruments for settlement restructuring and infrastructure alignment.
- Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025 - 2030): Prioritises improved access to housing, infrastructure-led development, and inclusive urban growth as part of provincial socio-economic transformation.

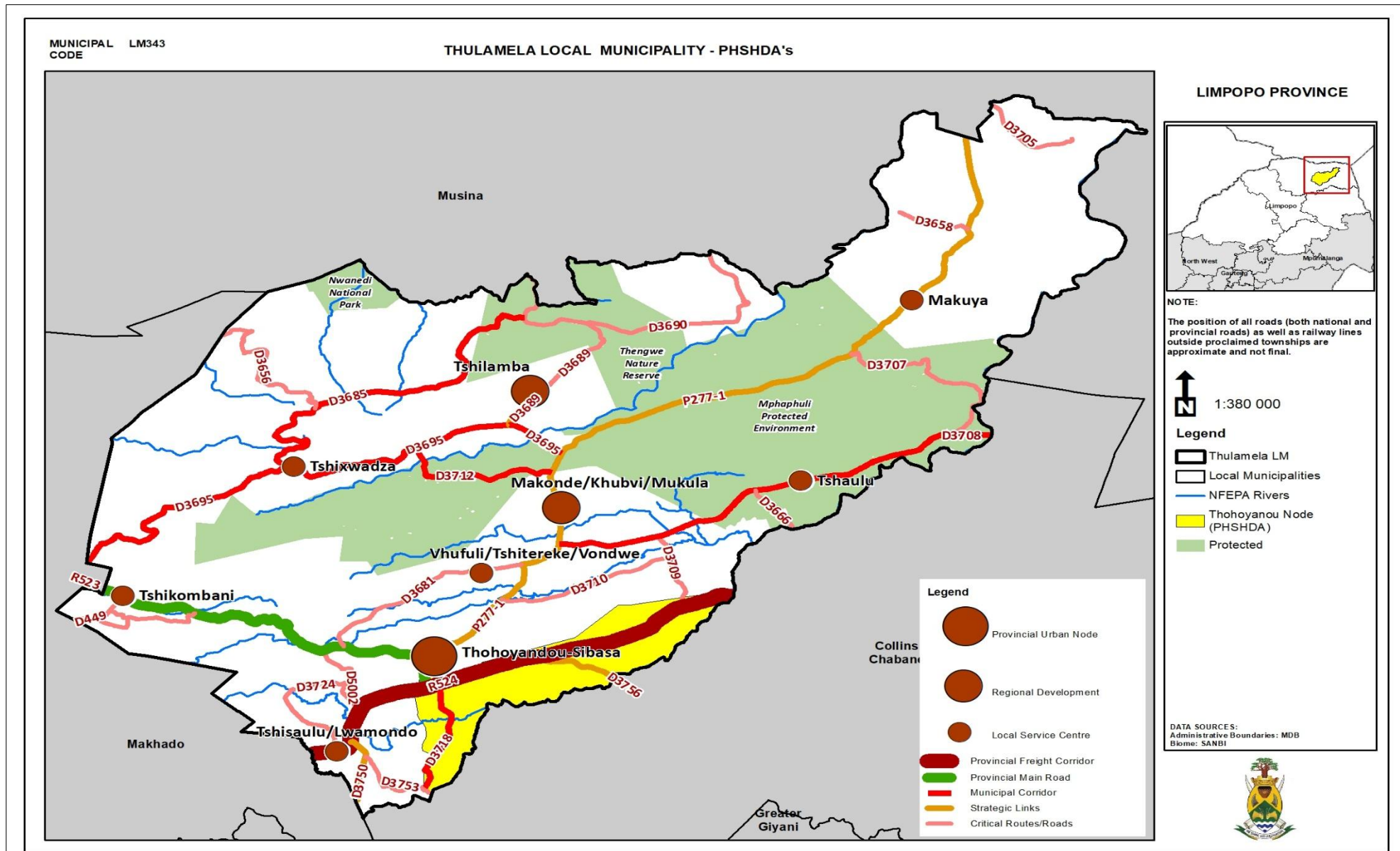
Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality

- Spatial Restructuring: PSHDAs provide a clear mechanism to restructure settlement patterns by concentrating housing and infrastructure investment within Thohoyandou and its functional urban area.
- Integrated Development: Housing delivery within PSHDAs should be closely aligned with transport networks, economic activities, social facilities, and bulk infrastructure planning.
- Densification and Mixed Use: The PSHDA areas present opportunities for higher-density, mixed-use development that supports efficient land use and improved access to services.
- Infrastructure Coordination: The designation strengthens the case for coordinated investment across spheres of government, reducing fragmented and ad hoc infrastructure delivery.
- Environmental Sustainability: Settlement expansion within PSHDAs must be guided by environmental sensitivity, climate resilience, and the protection of ecological assets.
- Economic and Social Outcomes: PSHDAs can contribute to local economic development, job creation, and improved livelihoods by linking housing development with construction activity and access to urban opportunities.
- SDF Alignment: The Thulamela SDF should use PSHDAs as a primary spatial targeting instrument for human settlements planning, budgeting, and land use management decisions.





Map 27: PSHDA'S





3.5.5 Infrastructure and Access to Engineering Services

The strategic objectives of the priority area are to have accessible basic and infrastructure services. The intention is to provide services to all household in a sustainable manner.

Service delivery is the provision of services with the aim of improving levels and quality of life in terms of the powers and functions of TLM, as stipulated in the Constitution of RSA in Section 156 and 229, Chapter 5 of Municipal System Act 117 of 1998. National Development Plan indicate that to achieve the sustainable and inclusive growth by 2030 south Africa need to invest in a strong network of economic infrastructure designed to support the country's long-term objectives.

This is possible if there is targeted development of transport, energy, water resources, and information and communication technology (ICT) networks. The challenge is to maintain and grow it to address the demands of economy effectively and efficiently.

3.5.5.1 Transportation Infrastructure

a. Road Network

- The well-developed road network facilitates accessibility and mobility, supporting local economic development (agriculture and tourism). Secondly promotes land use efficiency guiding urban growth, reducing informal settlement sprawl. It further enhances service delivery through infrastructure planning (water, electricity and communication infrastructure), as well as responsive emergency services, thereby encouraging investment (PPP's)

- The most prominent route R524 which is the Provincial Freight Corridor according to the LSDF, 2025 which is on the south of the municipal area and runs in an east-west direction. This is the busiest route within the municipal area and links Thohoyandou with Makhado in the west and Thohoyandou with Kruger National Park via Punda Maria Gate in the east. It also forms the direct link between TLM, CCLM and MKLM as well as the national route (N1). The western section of route R524 is significantly busier than the eastern section, which serves the more rural parts of the municipality.
- Route R523 which is the Provincial Main Road Network according to the LSDF, 2025 which links Sibasa to Tshikombani from where it runs in a westerly direction towards Waterpoort where it also links with N1. It primarily serves the north-western parts of TLM.
- Other prominent routes playing an important role in the municipal area include route D3708 which runs parallel to the north of R524 from Mahagala in the east to Makula in the central part from where it extends in a westerly direction as route D3681 past Vhufuli and up to Dovhoni where it links with route R523.
- Route D3681, D3708, D3709, D3666 and D3658 effectively serve all the villages located along the Luvuvhu River floodplain.
- Route P277-1 which the LSDF, 2025 regard as the Strategic Link extends from Thohoyandou, past Sibasa towards Makula and then in the northerly direction towards Khubvi and Makonde from where





it extends along the linear range of settlements towards Makuya and Masisi.

- Route D3695 which mostly gravel, connects on route P277-1 at Makonde and at Tshilamba it turns westerly parallel to the Mutale River and extends along the linear range of settlements where it joins route R523 at Siloam.

Apart from these major routes there are lower order roads, mostly gravel servicing various rural settlements within the municipal area include:

- D3690 which links all the linear range of settlements of Gwengoni, Thogani, Lurangwe up to Tshitambe in the Tshikundamalema Traditional Authorities area,
- D3707 that links route P277-1 with route D3708 in Ha-Lambani area,
- D3709 that links route D3708 with route R524,
- D3712 that provides a link with P277-1 along the linear settlements of Thengwe, Maraxwe, Mianzwi, Tshiombo and Matangari.
- D3724 through Lwamondo linking route D5002 with R524 and route D3718 that links route R524 with Tswinga and all the settlements on the south western part of CCLM.
- D3756 branches from R524 to provide an important link between Thohoyandou and Malamulele in the CCLM.

b. Public Transport

Public transport in TLM is essential for daily movement, especially given the municipality's dispersed settlement pattern and limited access to private

vehicles. However, the spatial distribution of transport infrastructure reflects uneven development, with formalised facilities concentrated in the urban core while rural areas remain underserved.

Formal public transport facilities within TLM are predominantly concentrated in major economic nodes such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Tshilamba, where commuter demand is highest and infrastructure investment has historically been prioritised. In contrast, many rural settlements rely on informal taxi ranks, typically unmarked open spaces or roadside bays that serve as key pick-up and drop-off points for residents and also travel long distances to those points mentioned above.

Table 21: Public Transport Facilities

Public Transport Facilities	Name of Facility
Taxi Rank	Sibasa Taxi Rank
	Thohoyandou Venda Plaza Taxi Rank
	Thulamela Taxi Rank
	Thavhani Taxi Rank
	Mvusuludzo Taxi Rank
	Tshikombani Taxi Rank
	Tshilamba Taxi Rank
	Tshilamba Complex Taxi Rank
	Vhufuli Taxi Rank
Intermodal Facility	Thohoyandou Intermodal Transport Facility (Not Functional)





Public Transport Facilities	Name of Facility
Bus Rank	Sibasa Bus Rank
	Thohoyandou Bus Rank
	Thavhani Bus Rank

In addition to the main taxi ranks above, there are numerous informal taxis stops and ad hoc pick-up and drop-off points scattered throughout the municipality. These sites often emerge organically at locations where demand for public transport is high, such as near shopping centres, clinic entrances, school gates, roadside trading areas, intersections of major local roads, and entrances to densely populated villages or settlements. These informal points are not officially demarcated, do not offer shelter or basic commuter facilities, and are often situated in areas with poor pedestrian infrastructure.

Examples of such informal pick-up/drop-off points include: Sibasa adjacent to the Boxer store and adjacent Caltex garage, Vondwe T-Junction at Elegant Garage, Tshixwadza next to Tshixwadza Primary Schools, Dzimauli next Tshavhadinda Primary school. While the taxi industry is essential for passenger transport and provides employment opportunities, it is not a primary driver of the local economy.

c. Rail Transportation

There is no existing rail transportation within the TLM. However, the Limpopo Spatial Development Plan 2025, presents long-term proposals for the establishment of a new railway connection within the province in a phased approach linking major Urban Nodes, such as Mokopane and Polokwane,

Polokwane and Tubatse, Thohoyandou and Tzaneen, Polokwane and Tzaneen, with each other. Then further linking second order nodes (Regional Development Anchors) with Urban Nodes, e.g., Makhado with Thohoyandou, Giyani with Thohoyandou, Jane Furse and Lebogakgomo with Polokwane and Tubatse, Groblersdal with the network and extending it into Gauteng.

d. Non-Motorized Transport (NMT)

NMT is a crucial mode that provides affordable mobility and access, especially for those who cannot afford private motor vehicles, serving both as a feeder to public transport and a primary mode for short trips. In TLM, there is a challenge of poor implementation and understanding of NMT dynamics within the rural and small-town context of TLM.

Donkey carts remain a prevalent mode of transport within TLM, especially in rural areas (remote settlements) where road infrastructure is limited and motorised transportation is often limited and unaffordable. They are primarily used for transporting goods such as firewood, water, and agricultural produce. This reflects both the socioeconomic conditions of rural communities and the infrastructural gaps that persist.

While practical and affordable, the use of donkey carts also highlights the need for inclusive transport planning that accommodates traditional, non-motorised transport within the broader mobility network of the municipality.

3.5.5.2 Water Infrastructure

Access to reliable, adequate, and sustainable water supply remains a critical determinant of spatial equity, public health, and economic development within





Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). This challenge is particularly pronounced given the municipality's dispersed rural settlement structure, expanding urban centres, and increasing demand associated with population growth, housing delivery, and economic activity. Water infrastructure constraints therefore represent a key spatial informant that must directly influence settlement planning, land use management, and infrastructure prioritisation within the SDF.

Water services within TLM are characterised by a mixed system comprising formal reticulated supply in major urban and peri-urban areas such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa/Makwarela, and Shayandima, alongside less reliable supply arrangements in rural and outlying settlements. The primary water sources serving the municipality include surface water and groundwater systems, notably the Nandoni, Vondo, Damani, and Tshirovha Dams, as well as a weir located in Khalavha village which supplies surrounding communities. In more remote settlements, households continue to rely on springs, boreholes, and direct abstraction from rivers, reflecting persistent spatial inequalities in access to basic services, as acknowledged in the Thulamela IDP Review.

Institutionally, Thulamela Local Municipality is not the Water Services Authority (WSA). Bulk water supply and scheme management fall under the mandate of the Vhembe District Municipality (VDM), which sources water through regional bulk schemes linked to major surface water systems, supplemented by smaller reservoirs and groundwater abstraction. This governance arrangement places a strong emphasis on intergovernmental coordination to ensure that bulk water investments translate into effective local reticulation,

system maintenance, and reliable household access. Weak alignment between bulk infrastructure provision and local settlement growth remains a significant risk, particularly in areas experiencing rapid densification or housing development.

The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) identifies water security and bulk infrastructure capacity as foundational requirements for spatial transformation and inclusive development. The NSDF explicitly recognises that infrastructure deficits and unreliable service provision reinforce spatial inequality, limit economic potential, and undermine the viability of settlement nodes and development corridors. It therefore calls for the prioritisation of infrastructure investment within strategic nodes, human settlement growth areas, and priority development regions, supported by integrated planning across spheres of government.

At provincial level, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) identifies water availability and infrastructure capacity as binding constraints to development in several municipalities, including those within the Vhembe District.

The LSDF emphasises the need to align settlement expansion, housing delivery, and economic development with available bulk water resources, while prioritising investment in strategic urban centres such as Thohoyandou. It further highlights the importance of protecting key water resource infrastructure and catchment areas from incompatible land uses to ensure long-term water security.





The Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025–2030) reinforces these priorities by identifying water infrastructure as a critical enabler of provincial socio-economic development and spatial restructuring. The LDP sets a provincial target of increasing access to reliable water services to at least 80 percent by 2030 and prioritises the upgrading of ageing infrastructure, reduction of water losses, completion of bulk water schemes, and improved water conservation and demand management. The plan also notes that, despite improvements in access, service reliability remains a significant challenge, with frequent interruptions constraining household well-being and economic productivity.

In line with national policy on Free Basic Services, TLM provides 6 kilolitres of free basic water per month to registered indigent households. According to the Thulamela IDP 2024/2025–2026/2027, approximately 14,383 households currently benefit from this programme. While this intervention contributes to poverty alleviation and basic service access, its effectiveness is limited by infrastructure capacity, operational challenges, and intermittent supply, particularly in rural settlements.

Water infrastructure planning within TLM should directly support key Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) prioritises equitable access to safe and reliable water, which remains a central challenge in rural and peripheral settlements. SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) underscores the need for resilient infrastructure to support inclusive and functional human settlements, particularly within growing urban nodes such as Thohoyandou, while SDG 13 (Climate Action) highlights the

importance of strengthening resilience to climate-induced water stress. The Thulamela SDF therefore, plays a key role in spatially aligning settlement growth with available water resources and promoting sustainable, climate-resilient infrastructure investment.

Water Challenges

- Seasonal variability and periods of drought further affect the reliability of supply, particularly in rural settlement which relies heavily on springs and rivers for water supply.
- Ageing infrastructure is also part of the main challenges, resulting in frequent pipe bursts, leakages, and inefficiencies that reduce the lifespan and reliability of the system.
- TLM is also challenged by a high level of non-revenue water, including physical losses from leakages and commercial losses due to unmetered connections. Vandalism and theft of water infrastructure components remain a challenge to the water supply systems within the TLM.
- Intermittent water supply is common, especially in the peripheral villages, where infrastructure backlogs and low reservoir capacity cause prolonged periods without water.
- These inconsistencies not only affect household consumption but also limit the viability of institutions and small businesses that depend on a steady water supply.





a. Water Treatment Plant (WTP)

TLM is serviced by a number of key water treatment plants that are essential for ensuring the availability of potable water to both urban and rural communities. The primary water treatment plants within the municipality include: Vondo Water Treatment Plant, Damani Water Treatment Plant, Dzingahe Water Treatment Plant, Dzindi Water Treatment Plant, Mudaswali Water Treatment Plant, Belemu Water Treatment Plant

Water Treatment Plant Challenges:

The water demands exceed the water capacity. The increasing water demand is driven by population growth, urban expansion, and rising per capita water consumption.

This imbalance results in inconsistent supply, reduced water quality in some instances, and growing public dissatisfaction in underserved areas. Most of the WTP are ageing and are in need of refurbishment and they are also affected by Vandalism.

There is a notable absence of structured preventative maintenance programmes across most water treatment facilities, which is also influenced by the lack of technical staff capacity, limited budget allocation, and insufficient asset management systems, which has also contributed to the reactive maintenance culture.

Legislative and Policy Framework

Water infrastructure planning and management within Thulamela are informed by the following key instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 27): Establishes the right of access to sufficient water.
- Water Services Act (1997): Regulates the provision of water services and defines institutional roles and responsibilities.
- National Water Act (1998): Provides the framework for the protection, use, development, conservation, and management of water resources.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires alignment between spatial planning, infrastructure provision, and sustainable development.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Identifies water security as a prerequisite for economic growth and sustainable settlements.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Positions water infrastructure as a critical spatial development lever and investment priority.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025): Emphasises alignment between settlement growth, infrastructure capacity, and environmental sustainability.
- Limpopo Development Plan (LDP, 2025–2030): Prioritises bulk water infrastructure investment, service reliability, and water security as drivers of inclusive growth.

Implications for TLMSDF:

- Spatial Targeting: Settlement expansion and housing development should be prioritised within areas where bulk water supply and reticulation capacity can be reliably supported.



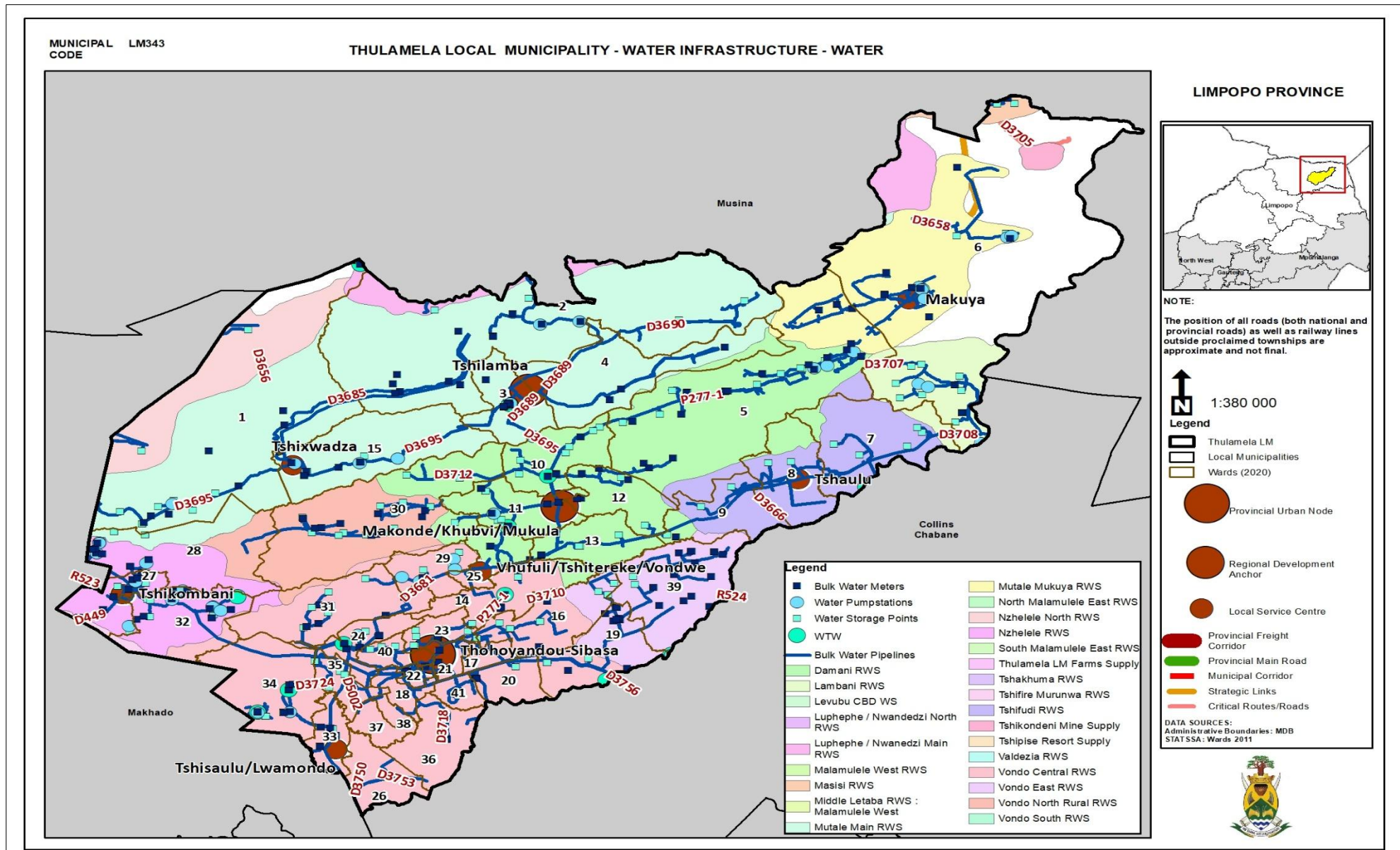


- Infrastructure Alignment: The SDF must align proposed growth nodes, PHSHDAs, and economic development areas with existing and planned bulk water infrastructure.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: Strong coordination between TLM, VDM, and sector departments is essential to ensure effective planning, funding, and implementation of water infrastructure projects.
- Service Equity: Targeted interventions are required to address service backlogs and unreliable supply in rural and peripheral settlements to reduce spatial inequality.
- Environmental Protection: Catchment areas, dams, and strategic water infrastructure should be protected from incompatible land uses to safeguard long-term water security.
- Climate Resilience: Water infrastructure planning should incorporate climate variability and drought risk to enhance resilience and ensure sustainable service delivery





Map 28: Water Infrastructure - Water





3.5.5.3 Sanitation

Sanitation and water (infrastructure and provision) are critical components of basic service provision that cannot be separated. Inadequate or inappropriate sanitation infrastructure has direct implications for settlement sustainability, groundwater quality, and the long-term viability of human settlements, particularly in densely populated and environmentally sensitive areas.

The provision of adequate and safe sanitation services in TLM continues to be constrained by historical backlogs, infrastructure capacity limitations, and the municipality's dispersed settlement pattern. These challenges are most evident in rural villages and informal or high-density settlement areas, where access to dignified sanitation services remains below acceptable standards. Sanitation services within TLM fall under the jurisdiction of the Vhembe District Municipality (VDM), which acts as the Water Services Authority, while the local municipality plays a key role in settlement planning, land use management, and alignment of infrastructure delivery with spatial development priorities.

TLM exhibits a dual sanitation profile. Formal sewer reticulation and waterborne sanitation systems are predominantly located within urban and peri-urban centres such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa/Makwarela, and Shayandima. In contrast, the majority of rural settlements rely on on-site sanitation solutions, including Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines and unimproved pit toilets. While on-site systems provide a basic level of service, their widespread use reflects limited bulk and reticulation capacity and presents ongoing challenges related to environmental health, maintenance, and long-term sustainability.

Key constraints affecting sanitation infrastructure within TLM include ageing sewer networks in urban areas, limited treatment and reticulation capacity relative to growing demand, funding constraints, and the fragmented spatial form of settlements. Dispersed and low-density settlement patterns significantly increase the cost and technical complexity of extending sewer networks, often rendering conventional waterborne systems unviable in rural areas. Furthermore, the continued reliance on pit-based sanitation systems poses potential risks to groundwater quality, particularly in areas with high water tables, poor soil conditions, or proximity to watercourses.

From a spatial planning perspective, sanitation infrastructure represents a critical informant for guiding settlement consolidation, densification, and the prioritisation of development areas. Addressing sanitation challenges requires a differentiated and spatially responsive approach that aligns sanitation technologies with settlement typologies, environmental conditions, and long-term growth trajectories, while progressively improving access to safe, dignified, and sustainable sanitation services across the municipality.

Sanitation and service delivery within TLM should directly support SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), which calls for universal access to safe, dignified, and sustainable sanitation services. Improved sanitation also contributes to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by reducing exposure to waterborne diseases and environmental health risks, particularly in rural and high-density settlements. In addition, SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) emphasises resilient and inclusive infrastructure as a foundation for sustainable human settlements.





The TLM SDF, therefore, plays a key role in spatially aligning settlement growth with appropriate sanitation technologies and infrastructure capacity to support long-term sustainability and human dignity.

Legislative and Policy Framework:

Sanitation planning and service provision within Thulamela are informed by the following key instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 27): Establishes the right of access to sufficient water and sanitation.
- Water Services Act (1997): Regulates the provision of water and sanitation services and defines institutional responsibilities.
- National Water Act (1998): Protects water resources from pollution and unsustainable use.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires alignment between settlement planning, infrastructure provision, and environmental sustainability.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Identifies sanitation infrastructure as essential to human dignity, public health, and sustainable settlements.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Emphasises infrastructure-led spatial transformation and the need to align settlement growth with service capacity.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025): Highlights sanitation infrastructure backlogs as a constraint to settlement sustainability and urban consolidation.

- Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) 2025–2030: Prioritises the upgrading of sanitation infrastructure, improved service reliability, and environmentally sustainable service delivery.

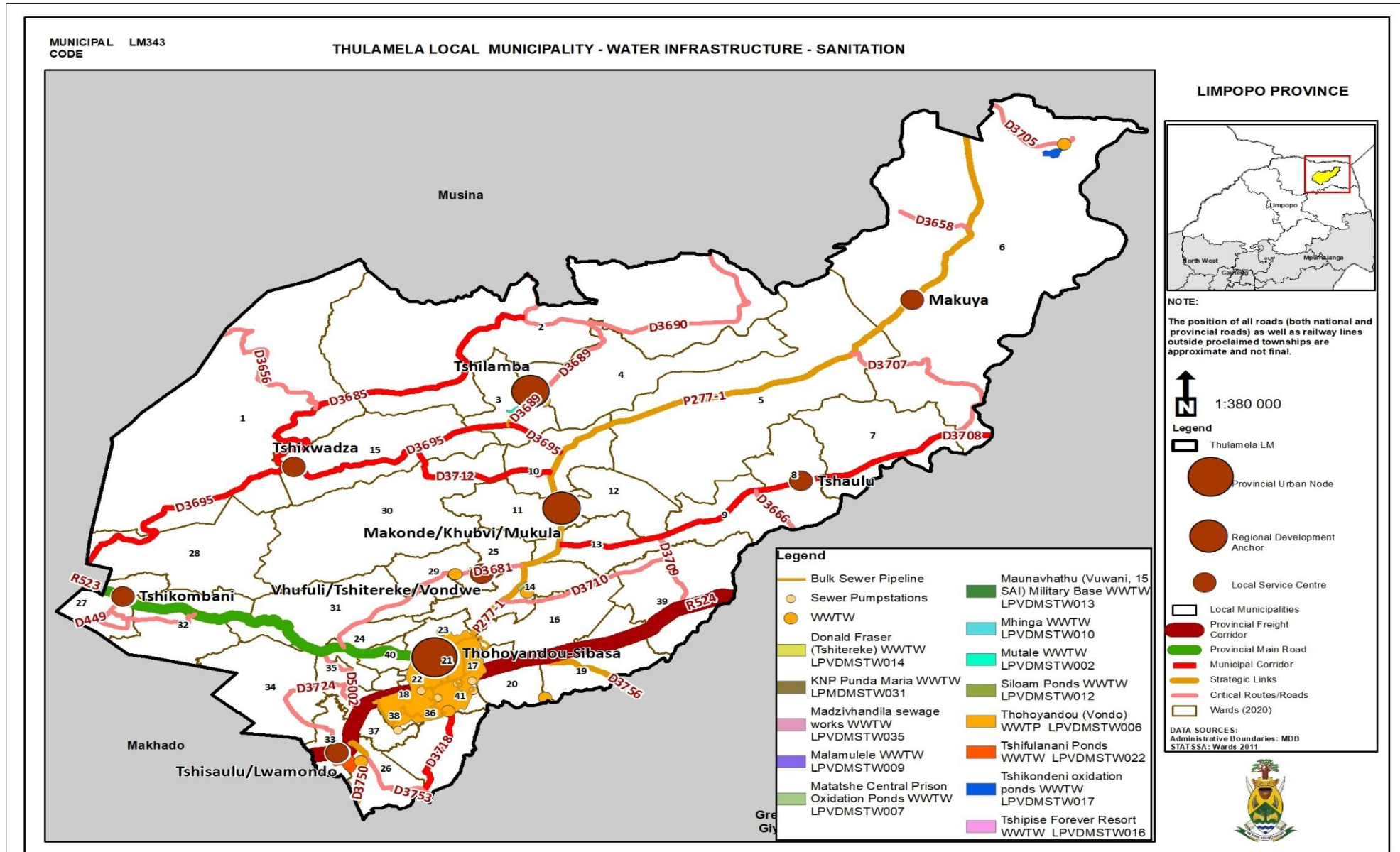
Implications for TLMSDF:

- Settlement Planning: Future settlement expansion should be guided by the availability and feasibility of sanitation infrastructure, with higher-density development prioritised in areas where sewer reticulation can be supported.
- Infrastructure Targeting: Sanitation investment should be focused on identified urban nodes, PHSHDAs, and priority growth areas to maximise impact and cost efficiency.
- Environmental Protection: Areas reliant on pit-based sanitation require careful management to mitigate risks to groundwater and surface water resources.
- Technology Differentiation: Alternative and decentralised sanitation technologies should be considered for rural and low-density settlements where conventional systems are not viable.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: Effective collaboration between TLM and VDM is essential to align sanitation planning with spatial development proposals and capital investment programmes.
- Human Dignity and Equity: Progressive upgrading of sanitation services remains central to improving living conditions, protecting health, and reducing spatial inequality within the municipality.





Map 29: Water Infrastructure - Sanitation





3.5.5.4 Electricity

Electricity infrastructure is a critical enabler of economic development, service delivery, and improved quality of life within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). Reliable access to electricity underpins industrial and commercial activity, supports social infrastructure, and enables households to meet basic needs such as cooking, heating, lighting, and communication. The Integrated Energy Plan (2013) recognises energy availability as a fundamental input to production processes and economic growth, with energy shortages having direct and adverse impacts on economic performance and household well-being.

Although TLM is not authorised as an electricity distribution authority, this does not negate the municipality's responsibility to assess electricity needs, identify backlogs, and integrate electrification requirements into spatial planning and infrastructure prioritisation processes. Electricity planning therefore remains a key spatial informant within the SDF, influencing settlement growth patterns, economic node development, and the location of social and community facilities.

Electricity supply within Thulamela falls under the jurisdiction of Eskom and, at district level, is coordinated through the Vhembe District Municipality (VDM). According to the VDM IDP 2025/2026, a total of 17 major substations service the Vhembe District. Within TLM, key substations include Muledane and Tshikweta, while the Mandala substation is currently awaiting the installation of a feeder line. To address capacity constraints and improve supply

reliability, Eskom has proposed the construction of additional substations at Lambani and Tshilamba, connecting from the Makonde T-off point. These investments are intended to strengthen electricity capacity and support growing demand within the municipality.

From a spatial perspective, electricity infrastructure capacity and network coverage have a direct bearing on the feasibility and sequencing of development. Areas experiencing limited capacity or network constraints face challenges in accommodating new housing, densification, and economic activities, particularly within priority settlement nodes and emerging growth areas. Conversely, areas with adequate and reliable electricity supply present opportunities for intensified land use, mixed-use development, and local economic development initiatives.

The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) identifies energy infrastructure as a critical component of spatial transformation and economic competitiveness, emphasising the need to align settlement development and industrial activity with energy availability. Similarly, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) highlights electricity capacity constraints as a key development limitation in several municipalities and promotes the strengthening of energy infrastructure to support urban nodes, economic corridors, and Priority Human Settlements and Housing Development Areas.

The Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) 2025–2030 further reinforces the importance of securing reliable energy supply and expanding alternative and





renewable energy sources as part of the province's broader infrastructure and economic development agenda.

Legislative and Policy Framework:

Electricity planning and provision within Thulamela are informed by the following instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Schedule 4B): Assigns electricity reticulation as a municipal function while recognising differentiated institutional arrangements.
- Integrated Energy Plan (2013): Provides national guidance on energy supply, demand, and long-term planning.
- Electricity Regulation Act (2006): Regulates electricity generation, transmission, and distribution.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires alignment between spatial development and infrastructure capacity.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Identifies reliable energy supply as a prerequisite for economic growth and social development.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Positions energy infrastructure as a key spatial development lever.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025): Emphasises energy infrastructure strengthening to support settlement nodes and economic development.
- Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) 2025–2030: Prioritises energy security, infrastructure investment, and renewable energy expansion.

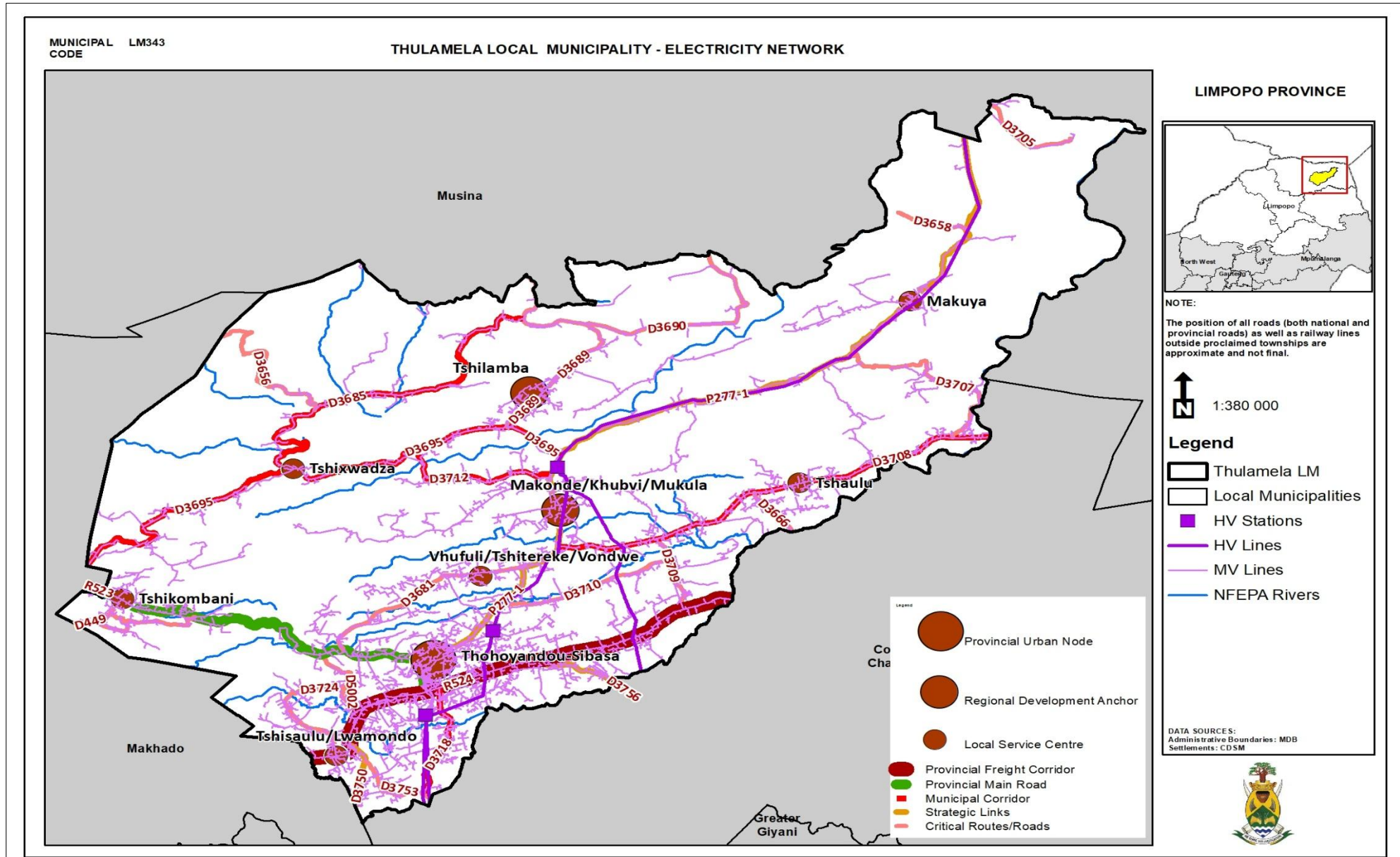
Implications for Thulamela Local Municipality:

- Spatial Targeting: Settlement growth and economic development should be prioritised in areas with sufficient electricity capacity or planned network upgrades.
- Infrastructure Alignment: Proposed housing projects, PSHDAs, and economic nodes must be aligned with existing and planned electricity infrastructure.
- Intergovernmental Coordination: Close coordination between TLM, VDM, Eskom, and provincial departments is essential to ensure infrastructure investments support spatial development priorities.
- Capacity Planning: The municipality should proactively identify electricity backlogs and future demand to inform bulk infrastructure planning and development phasing.
- Economic Enablement: Reliable electricity supply is essential to support local economic development, SMMEs, and value-adding activities within identified nodes.
- Sustainability and Resilience: Opportunities for decentralised and renewable energy solutions should be explored to enhance energy security and resilience.





Map 30: Electricity Network





3.5.5.5 Waste Management

Waste management is a critical component of environmental sustainability, public health protection, and spatial quality within Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM). Effective waste collection, disposal, and recycling systems contribute directly to safe living environments, protection of natural resources, and the overall functionality and attractiveness of settlements. Inadequate waste management, particularly in rural and high-density areas, can result in land and water pollution, health risks, and the degradation of public spaces.

TLM has developed a Waste Management Plan aligned with its Environmental Management Plan, which provides a framework for regulating refuse removal, controlling illegal dumping, and promoting recycling initiatives within the municipal area. Waste management services are relatively well established in urban centres such as Thohoyandou and Sibasa, where regular refuse collection and designated disposal facilities are more readily available. These areas benefit from higher population densities, better road access, and closer proximity to waste management infrastructure, which support more efficient service delivery.

In contrast, rural and peripheral settlements within TLM continue to face significant waste management challenges. These include limited access to formal refuse removal services, inadequate infrastructure, long collection distances, and dispersed settlement patterns that increase service delivery costs. As a result, many rural communities rely on informal dumping sites or backyard disposal practices, which pose risks to environmental quality, water resources, and public health. These spatial disparities in waste service

provision reflect broader structural challenges related to settlement form, infrastructure backlogs, and institutional capacity.

The National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022) identifies waste management infrastructure as a key component of sustainable human settlements and environmental resilience, emphasising the need to align settlement development with service capacity and environmental protection objectives. Similarly, the Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025) highlights waste management backlogs in rural areas as a constraint to settlement sustainability and calls for targeted infrastructure investment, improved waste collection systems, and the promotion of circular economy approaches. The Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) 2025–2030 further reinforces the importance of improving waste management services, particularly in rural communities, to support environmental sustainability, public health, and inclusive development.

From a spatial planning perspective, waste management infrastructure and service coverage represent an important informant for guiding settlement consolidation, the location of higher-density development, and the prioritisation of infrastructure investment. Improving waste management outcomes within TLM requires a differentiated approach that strengthens urban waste systems while extending appropriate, cost-effective solutions to rural and low-density settlements.





a. Refuse Collection and Disposal

TLM has enacted a Refuse Removal, Refuse Dumps, and Solid Waste Disposal By-Law to regulate waste removal and dumping practices, aiming to maintain cleanliness and reduce pollution in both urban and rural areas. The implementation of this By-law remains a challenge, especially in rural villages where waste collection services are limited, with villages lacking regular refuse removal. According to the TLM IDP 2024/2025 – 2026/2027, TLM is responsible for the waste collection of 60034 households. The following areas receive the waste collection services: Shayandima, Makwarela, Thohoyandou P-East, Thohoyandou Block F, Thohoyandou Block J, Thohoyandou M, Thohoyandou Golgotha, Thohoyandou Block G, Thohoyandou N, Thohoyandou P-West, Thohoyandou Unit C, Mbaleni, Maniini, Thohoyandou A, Thohoyandou Q, Thohoyandou Unit D and Tshishushuru. The service is also provided at the following CBD: Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Mutale CBD, as well as BAs in the nodal points and rural settlements. Extension of refuse removal service has been done to the following villages, Mulodi, Phalama, Khubvi, Makonde, Lwamondo, Tswinga, Khumbe, Tshidzete, Tshalovha and so forth. Areas that are not serviced at the household level are serviced at (RDP) level, along the main roads and collection is also done on the Nappy Stands. Waste collection in the Municipality is characterized by urban and rural areas. Thulamela municipality collect 5761 cubic metres respectively at around 59 097 households. Waste collection in rural areas is not done systematically therefore villages in rural areas constitute backlog. There are transfer stations that are established in Rural Areas, namely Tshikombani, Tshaulu, Makonde.

The collection is done once a week in the proclaimed areas and every day in the CBDs.

b. Landfill Sites

TLM has 1 licensed landfill sites, namely Thohoyandou/Tswinga Landfill site. There is, however, no strategy in place for refuse collection for rural communities and the main challenge is the access road for refuse collection in residential area are gravel and not maintained all the time. Waste that is disposed at the landfill is reclaimed for recycling by reclaimers that are registered with the municipality. The data of the waste that is disposed and recycled at the municipality is captured at the South African Waste Information System (SAWS).

Table 22: Status of Thulamela Landfill Site

<i>Landfill sites</i>	<i>Status</i>
<i>Thohoyandou Landfill</i>	<i>Operational</i>
<i>Gundani Landfill</i>	<i>Under Construction</i>
<i>Makwilidza Landfill</i>	<i>Not Operational</i>

Source: TLM IDP 2024/2025-2026/2027

Legislative and Policy Framework

Waste management within Thulamela is guided by the following key instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Section 24): Establishes the right to an environment that is not harmful to health or well-being.





- National Environmental Management: Waste Act (2008): Regulates waste management practices, including waste minimisation, recycling, and disposal.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires alignment between land use planning, infrastructure provision, and environmental sustainability.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Emphasises environmentally sustainable service delivery and improved waste management.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Identifies waste management as a key element of resilient and sustainable settlements.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025): Highlights waste management challenges in rural settlements and promotes integrated service delivery.
- Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) 2025–2030: Prioritises improved waste management services, environmental protection, and sustainable infrastructure development.

Implications for TLMSDF:

- Service Differentiation: Waste management approaches should be tailored to urban, peripheral urban, and rural settlement contexts to ensure cost-effective and sustainable service delivery.
- Settlement Planning: Higher-density development should be encouraged in areas where formal waste management services can be efficiently provided.

- Environmental Protection: Measures are required to prevent illegal dumping and mitigate environmental degradation, particularly near watercourses and sensitive ecosystems.
- Infrastructure Investment: Targeted investment in waste collection infrastructure and facilities is required to address rural service backlogs.
- Circular Economy Opportunities: Recycling, waste beneficiation, and community-based waste initiatives present opportunities for local economic development.
- Spatial Alignment: The SDF should align settlement growth with waste management capacity to promote clean, healthy, and sustainable living environments.





3.6 SPATIAL CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND SWOT ANALYSIS

The TLMSDF review is influenced by geographical, economic and social considerations and it is essential to identify and address the key challenges and opportunities identified during the analysis of the 3 key influencing sections. Thus, the development of table 23 below provides an outline on the spatial challenges and opportunities identified, with Table 23 bringing forth the SWOT analysis

Table 23: TLM Challenges and Opportunities

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Landlocked for urban expansion	Urban renewal and infill development within existing urban areas to optimise land use and revitalise underutilised precincts.
Inadequate and unreliable water provision, which constrains settlement growth and economic activity	Public–private partnerships (PPPs) and targeted infrastructure investment to improve bulk and reticulation water systems
Inconsistent refuse collection	Expansion of waste management services linked to local job creation and recycling initiatives
Ageing and overburdened sanitation infrastructure, including frequent blockages and sludge overflows in Thohoyandou and Sibasa CBDs	Infrastructure upgrading programmes aligned with densification, PSHDAs, and priority development nodes
Proliferation of informal backyard accommodation, particularly for students and CBD's workforce, is placing pressure on infrastructure and services.	Formalisation of SMMEs through designated sites, and local economic development support.
Dilapidated buildings and urban decay within CBDs, undermining safety and economic vitality	Inner-city regeneration, adaptive reuse of buildings, and incentives for private-sector-led redevelopment
Informal land allocation practices by Traditional authorities are leading to unplanned settlement growth and service inefficiencies	Co-operation strategies between the Municipality and Traditional Authorities for land allocation.
Limited after-hours economic activity, with retail centres closing early, contributing to reduced street activity and higher crime levels	Development of a diversified night-time economy through mixed-use precincts, extended trading hours, and improved urban management
	Tourism sector revitalisation to attract more investment.





The identified key challenges present significant constraints to TLM's vision of transitioning into a city by 2030. Limited availability of well-located land for expansion, compounded by fragmented land tenure arrangements, undermines the municipality's ability to plan and manage orderly urban growth. The development of compact, serviced, and efficient urban form remains difficult, weakening the foundations of city-level spatial organisation, especially with the backlog in the delivery of infrastructure as the foundation of investments.

Persistent infrastructure backlogs in water provision, sanitation, and refuse collection further constrain the functionality of TLM. Frequent service disruptions, ageing infrastructure, and sanitation system failures in key urban areas such as Thohoyandou and Sibasa CBDs compromise public confidence, compromise public health, and reduce the attractiveness of these areas for investment, business growth, and higher-density living. The city status requires reliable and resilient infrastructure systems capable of supporting continuous economic activity, population growth, and diversified land uses.

The TLM Challenges such as informal backyard accommodation, illegal land uses, and dilapidated buildings within CBDs, contribute to lessened functionality, environmental degradation, and declining spatial quality. These conditions undermine the role of the CBDs as vibrant economic and social anchors and reinforce patterns of urban decay rather than regeneration. In addition, limited after-hours economic activity (nightlife), with retail and commercial centres closing early, reduces urban vitality, increases insecurity

and opportunities for criminal activities, further constraining the development of a dynamic night-time economy typically associated with functional cities.

Collectively, these challenges reflect several structural constraints that continue to limit Thulamela's ability to operate as a city, regardless of it having the largest population compared to all municipalities within the VDM, while also being the smallest in terms of geographical size. Achieving the 2030 city vision will therefore depend on decisive spatial restructuring, infrastructure-led development, strengthened urban management, and the revitalisation of the already existing urban areas.





Table 24: The bridge between the TLM Vision Statement and the Spatial Development Concept.

City Function	Key Criteria to be Achieved for a City	Current Challenges within TLM	Required Shift to City Status
Spatial Structure & Urban Form	Compact, contiguous urban footprint with clear urban edges and densified nodes	The fragmented settlement pattern and the CBD is landlocked for expansion	Urban consolidation through infill, densification, and clearly defined growth boundaries
Land Governance & Tenure	Secure, predictable, and formally administered land rights	Predominance of informal and customary land allocation without General Plans in many rural and peripheral areas	Formalisation of land administration, approved General Plans, and tenure upgrading
Water Infrastructure	Reliable bulk and reticulation capacity supporting continuous urban growth	Water shortages, service interruptions, and thus subsequent reliance on informal sources	Infrastructure-led development aligned with bulk water capacity supported by VDM.
Sanitation Infrastructure	Predominantly safe, dignified, and environmentally sustainable sanitation systems	Ageing infrastructure, pit latrine dependence is dominant in rural areas, and CBD sewer spillage and overflows	Targeted upgrading of sewer systems and appropriate sanitation technologies
Waste Management	Regular refuse removal, compliant disposal sites, recycling systems	Rural service backlogs, illegal dumping, Adhoc disruption in waste collection, only 1 functional landfill site	Expanded service coverage and circular economy initiatives
Economic Base & Employment	Diversified urban economy with strong service, retail, and production sectors	Limited after-hours economy, underutilised CBDs	Mixed-use development, CBD regeneration, night-time economy
Urban Management & Public Realm	Safe, clean, and well-managed public spaces and CBDs	Dilapidated buildings, urban decay, safety concerns, dilapidated roads and street furniture	Active urban management, regeneration programmes, and enforcement
Housing & Accommodation	A range of formal housing typologies, including rental and student accommodation	Informal backyard accommodation pressure, especially in areas with immediate access to the CBD.	Purpose-built rental and student housing in appropriate locations and incentive support.
Mobility & Accessibility	Efficient movement between residential areas, economic nodes, and services	Dispersed settlements increase travel distances. The quality of roads in various areas and congested economic activities in the CBD, present a significant challenge to accessibility	Transit-oriented development and improved internal connectivity
Social Infrastructure	Adequate access to education, health, recreation, and civic facilities	Uneven access due to settlement dispersion	Consolidation of services within accessible urban nodes
Urban Vitality (24-hour City)	Extended trading hours, cultural and social activity after hours	Early closure of retail centres, which also presents opportunities for high criminal activities after 7 pm.	Development of a managed night-time economy and mixed-use precincts





Table 25: SWOT Analysis

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS			
STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
A large proportion of the population is within the working-age group (15–64), representing over 60% of the population.	High youth unemployment and a lack of vocational skills, particularly in rural villages.	Skills development programmes and partnerships with institutions like the UNIVEN, Vhembe TVET Colleges and Madzivhandila College of Agricultural can upskill youth for local employment.	Limited government and private sector funding for long-term skills and enterprise development may derail implementation.
The presence of higher education institutions (Univen, Vhembe TVET Colleges and Madzivhandila College of Agricultural) provides a foundation for research and innovation.	Lack of alignment between academic output and local labour market demands, limited absorption of graduates.	A structured graduate employment initiative to help absorb local graduates into various departments, improve service delivery, and build local institutional capacity.	Continued outmigration of skilled graduates due to limited local employment opportunities within the TLM to other areas.
A large proportion of land under Traditional Authorities allows for communal governance and cultural continuity.	Dual land administration (Municipal vs Traditional) often leads to land allocation conflicts and challenges in the enforcement of planning regulations.	Frameworks for cooperative governance and PTO reforms could formalise land tenure rights and improve spatial planning.	Tensions over land use rights and informal developments threaten municipal authority and the overall spatial transformation goals.





BIO-PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
Rich natural and cultural heritage sites (such as Fundudzi Lake, Thathe Vondo Forest, Tshatshingo Potholes, Mphaphuli Nature Reserve and so forth)	Inadequate tourism infrastructure and low tourism marketing.	Eco-tourism development and cultural heritage tourism improvement.	Environmental degradation and unregulated development could threaten biodiversity and sacred sites.
Substantial agricultural potential with good rainfall and fertile soils.	Agricultural land in high-potential areas is under pressure from residential development and businesses, Declining agricultural land due to water scarcity and lack of agricultural funding for emerging farmers.	Revitalising irrigation schemes (such as Tshiombo), Supporting emerging farmers, and promoting agro-processing zones.	Land tenure insecurity and unresolved land claims discourage investment in commercial agriculture, climate variability, drought, and competing land uses threaten agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods.
Vast nature and biodiversity hotspots, which are enhancing ecosystem services and climate resilience.	Illegal sand mining and deforestation for firewood leading to degradation of the environment.	Community-based conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.	Climate change, droughts, and lack of enforcement on illegal activities may accelerate ecological degradation.





BUILT ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
TLM has extensive road connectivity through routes like R524, R523 and P277-1, linking various nodes within the TLM.,	Poor condition of many access roads in rural areas and the lack of regular maintenance affects accessibility.	Investment in rural road upgrading under municipal EPWP or District Infrastructure Grants could unlock basic service provision, agricultural and tourism potential.	Delayed procurement, budget shortfalls, and extreme weather events may delay or damage critical road infrastructure.
High levels of formal housing with access to electricity.	Poor access to piped water, flushing toilets in the dwelling and refuse collection in rural areas.	Infrastructure rollouts through the District Water Services Development Plan and the National Treasury's municipal funding grants.	Ageing infrastructure, service delivery protests, and vandalism undermine progress and create uncertainty in service delivery.
Active public transport system (taxis and buses) which links major nodes such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa and various settlements within the TLM	Lack of formal public transport infrastructure in rural areas and poor roads within the TLM	Improving and formalising public transport and non-motorised transport infrastructure to enhance mobility and access to economic opportunities.	Road infrastructure backlog, poor maintenance of gravel roads, and limited funding impede transport development and regional integration.
Presence of licensed landfill sites and waste management policies.	Rural areas lack consistent waste removal services, residents rely on informal dumping and burning.	Expansion of transfer stations and community recycling initiatives could improve environmental health.	Inadequate waste infrastructure and maintenance could worsen pollution and public health outcomes.





3.7 TLMSDF 2019-2023 Achievements and Limitations

3.7.1. TLM Urban Areas (Provincial Urban Node and Regional Development Anchor)

Thohoyandou as a provincial urban node in terms of residential development, the municipality has successfully encouraged the residential infill through establishment of formal residential in areas within Thohoyandou-J, M and L, as there's an increase in construction of dwelling units.

The higher-density residential development was increasingly supported within and around the Thohoyandou CBD and mixed-use zones, particularly through the emergence of student accommodation, rental units and flats linked to the proximity of the Univen and economic opportunities in the CBD.

The residential development in the Sibasa node was characterised by incremental consolidation rather than large-scale expansion, which has limited this node growth and attraction of more economic activities within the Sibasa CBD.

Residential development in the Tshilamba node was characterised by incremental growth and consolidation, rather than formal township expansion. It has successfully encouraged the residential infill through establishment of formal residential areas within Tshilamba/Mutale. Progress towards future residential extension south-east of Thengwe High School was limited, with no major formal housing projects implemented during the period. However, the area remained earmarked for long-term development accommodating subsidy-linked, middle and higher-income housing, and lastly the residential

character of established areas was largely retained, with limited intrusion of incompatible land uses.

There is notable progress in the upgrading and formalisation of residential areas in the northern and western parts of the Univen precinct such as Ngovhela and Maungani area. This included improved access roads, service upgrades and the gradual formalisation of previously informal or semi-formal above-mentioned areas, contributing to better living conditions and stronger integration with the urban fabric of Thohoyandou.

TLM has succeeded in retaining the low-density residential character of Thohoyandou D and areas north of the VDM offices, where residential development remained controlled and compatible with surrounding tourism and institutional land uses. Moreover, TLM has maintained the low to medium density residential character of Sibasa, ensuring that new residential development did not compromise the node's administrative, institutional and cultural functions.

There has been gradual formalisation of residential areas under traditional authority, including improved access, basic services and land-use management. Although challenges remain, these interventions contributed to better integration of residential areas into the broader urban system of TLM.

Mixed-Use Developments

In terms of mixed-use development, the municipality has reinforced mixed-use activities along major movement corridors, particularly along the R524 and P277/1 routes. These corridors experienced continued consolidation of





commercial, office, retail and residential uses, strengthening their role as urban spines that support accessibility, economic activity and higher land-use intensity. TLM has made progress since 2019-2023 in promoting mixed-use development within designated areas such as Thohoyandou P, the south-western part of Thohoyandou F, and Thohoyandou Golgotha. In these areas, the emergence of small-scale commercial enterprises, residential units, student accommodation and service-oriented uses reflects a gradual transition from single-use residential areas.

Sibasa has noticeable growth of informal and formal small-scale commercial activities within residential areas, supporting local livelihoods and improving access to goods and services, mixed-use activities emerged primarily along key access routes and around institutional and government precincts, where small-scale retail, offices, services and residential uses were increasingly combined. Referring to Sibasa, higher-intensity and strategically located mixed-use developments were increasingly concentrated along major routes, benefiting from good access and visibility. In particular, business developments along P278/1 or R523 and P227/1 successfully captured expenditure from increasing traffic flows, reinforcing these roads as economic activity spines.

Tshilamba recorded modest but functional mixed-use development, especially along Route D3689 and around the existing business area. Mixed-use activities mainly took the form of small-scale retail, services, spaza shops, workshops and home-based enterprises, integrated within residential areas. The gradual emergence and strengthening of roadside businesses such as

retail outlets, fuel-related services and informal trading. This reinforced the route's role as an economic activity spine for the node/SDA.

Tourism

Thohoyandou has achieved gradual strengthening of tourism and accommodation developments, particularly in strategically identified locations. Tourism-related land uses were promoted north of the Thohoyandou CBD, along the P227/1 corridor and around Nandoni Dam, aligning with the SDF's spatial focus on leveraging natural and cultural assets.

Thohoyandou made notable progress in protecting and structuring its open space system. Environmentally sensitive areas, including river and stream banks, floodlines and geotechnically constrained land, were largely retained as undeveloped open space, contributing to environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

A key achievement was the protection and reinforcement of tourism-focused land uses around the Nandoni Dam as some owners were charged by Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) for violating land use rights.

New developments have increasingly subject to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Environmental Management Plans (EMPs), reflecting improved compliance with environmental legislation and municipal development control requirements. The requirement for approved site development plans (SDPs) further strengthened orderly tourism and accommodation development.





Sibasa experienced incremental growth between 2019-2023 in tourism and accommodation-related land uses, aligned with its proximity to government institutions, cultural assets and regional movement routes. The development of guesthouses, small lodges and short-stay accommodation increased modestly, supporting tourists linked to government services, business travel and cultural tourism in the Vhembe region.

Sibasa has the restriction of development in wetlands and natural vegetation areas, with development generally only permitted following formal environmental approval processes, which helped preserve the environmental integrity

TLM has made progress in restriction of development within wetlands, natural forests and riparian zones, with development only permitted following formal environmental approval processes. This reflects alignment with both the SDF and NEMA regulations, ensuring long-term ecological protection. TLM has failed to maintain open spaces and parks within Thohoyandou node, which makes it unsafe and affects environment.

Agriculture

Thohoyandou and Sibasa agricultural land together with grazing land has been reduced as a result of rapid urbanisation or urban growth. Agricultural land within and around Tshilamba was largely preserved for agricultural and complementary uses, with limited conversion to non-agricultural land uses, however from 2019-2023 agricultural land has been used for residential purposes due to demand in residential land.

TLM agricultural sector has also declined as a result of cooperatives collapse, vandalism in the irrigation schemes and the decline of funding from relevant stakeholders and poor implementation of strategies such as the CRDP, 2009. Moreover, agricultural land and grazing land throughout the municipality is under threat from residential expansion and demand in residential land together with tourism developments or establishments near dams and rivers channels.

Road Linkages

TLM, in terms of proposed road linkages/upgrades has failed from 2019-2023, to upgrade the R524 between Thavhani mall and the R524/D3756 intersection, R524 between Tshilidzini Hospital and Lwamondo to a four-lane road.

The availability and capacity of engineering services increasingly informed development decisions in Sibasa, with infrastructure constraints shaping the scale and location of new developments.

During the 2019–2023 period, there was incremental upgrading of movement and access roads, particularly along key routes such as D3689, which improved accessibility and supported economic activity within the node. Whilst not all proposed rural – urban linkages were fully upgraded throughout TLM, targeted improvements contributed to better connectivity between Tshilamba, Mutale and surrounding settlements, however due to heavy rains the D3689 route and other district roads which were proposed for upgrades are severely damaged which marks it unsafe for road users and pedestrians.





Incremental upgrading and maintenance of existing roads in Tshaulu and access routes improved public transport movement, accessibility and the overall legibility of the Tshaulu node, particularly along Route D3708. The section of Route R524 between Lwamondo and Tshilidzini Hospital require upgrade to at least a two-lane road, to accommodate high volumes of traffic passing through the area, however the municipality has failed to upgrade the road.

Limitations

TLM is facing challenges in implementing these strategies due to the fact the Thohoyandou CBD is landlocked, and there's no space for these strategies. The developments facing onto the R523 or P278/1 and R524 or P98/1 roads increasingly contributed to improved urban aesthetics, through better building orientation, landscaping and architectural treatments. TLM has failed to limit industrial development within all the CBDs, instead there's additional development of industries within the CBDs.

Furthermore, light industrial and commercial activities were permitted and consolidated north of the Shayandima IA along the R524.

Sibasa node achieved limited but spatially appropriate industrial development, consistent with its role as a secondary administrative and service node rather than a primary industrial hub.

Small-scale light industrial, service and workshop-related activities were accommodated in appropriate locations, particularly along movement routes linking Sibasa to Thohoyandou and Shayandima.

Tshilamba has achieved controlled and appropriately located industrial development, with light industrial, commercial and ancillary uses were gradually concentrated near the intersection of Routes D3689 and D3695, although development remained small-scale. However the area which was earmarked or zoned Industrial is not being utilized as per the proposed zoning.

3.7.2. Thulamela Rural Areas (Regional Development Anchor & Local Service centres)

-  Tshaulu node achieved less progress in settlement upgrading and formalisation, particularly within areas identified as upgrade and formalisation zones, considering of the provision of community facilities such as schools, clinics, open spaces and cemeteries increasingly informed settlement planning and upgrading processes.
-  In Mukula/Khubvi/Makonde node, infrastructure provision and upgrades increasingly informed the formalisation of settlements, with consideration given to access roads, water, sanitation and the location of community facilities such as schools, clinics, cemeteries and public open spaces.
-  Future residential development was largely confined to earmarked residential areas, with limited evidence of uncontrolled expansion beyond designated zones and importantly, residential expansion onto prime agricultural land and environmentally sensitive open space areas has been a challenge.





- ✚ A key spatial achievement in Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe node was the support for densification within the formal residential township east of Donald Fraser Hospital, which reinforced a more compact settlement pattern around a major institutional anchor.
- ✚ In Lwamondo/Tshisaulu node, from 2019-2023 TLM has failed to formalise the residential areas, nonetheless, it was able to retain the rural character of this SDA/node.
- ✚ Due to high demand of residential land, TLM is failing to protect the prime agricultural land or high agricultural potential land within this area.
- ✚ Looking at Tshikombani area due to high residential development, TLM has failed to protect high agricultural potential land as demand for rural residential or dwelling units are expanding. Moreover, the protection of wetlands, streams in this area is still a challenge.
- ✚ Tshixwadza areas has been facing challenges with formalisation of residential area due to its geographical location with reference topography, wherein the municipality is failing to formalise the residential area.
- ✚ Makuya area, is not different from Tshixwadza and other rural nodes wherein the ervens are still big as the municipality is failing to assist them as these requires in fill development and they are developing in prime agricultural land.
- ✚ Mixed-Use in Rural Areas
 - The mixed-use corridor along Route D3708 emerged as the primary economic activity spine of the Tshaulu node. The clustering of formal

and informal businesses along D3708, which improved economic visibility, accessibility and convenience for surrounding communities and passing travellers. This clustering enhanced local economic development without requiring large-scale formal commercial centres.

- The mixed-use zone increasingly provided a functional mix of retail and social facilities, supplying convenience goods and basic services to residents and travellers as a result of the TLM SDF under review highlighted or zoned rural business areas as mixed-use areas.
- The Mukula/Khubvi/Makonde node achieved improved access to convenience goods and basic social services for surrounding communities and passing travellers.
- Reinforcing its role as a local service centre rather than a high-order commercial node and recognition of Khubvi as a preferred location for a Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC), based on its central position between Makonde and Mukula.
- The area north and east of Donald Fraser Hospital increasingly functioned as the primary economic opportunity node within Vhufuli.
- Formal and informal businesses, including retail, services and home-based enterprises, were gradually consolidated in this area, strengthening its role as a local economic hub, together with a formal taxi rank and trade markets at the hospital gate.
- Lwamondo node, within the section of Route R524 between Mirunzini Lodge and Entertainment Center and Tshitshite Funeral Undertakers (located north of the R524/D3753 road Junction is considered a significant activity corridor within the Lwamondo node.





- It has achieved to provide a range social, business, commercial and residential uses to the surrounding communities and to travellers passing through R524 and D3753.
- There's intensive mixed-use development which has been promoted to the south of Mandala village, along the route R523 activity corridor, between Fondwe Primary School to the intersection of R523 and D449.
- In Tshixwadza area the municipality has failed to provide supporting structures and a site for taxi/bus rank for the community.
- The mixed use activities are taking place along the main road which is a gravel road.
- In Makuya area the municipality has failed to promote mixed use development along P277/1, failing to attract businesses near Makuya Nature Reserve which would have boost the economy.

Open Spaces and Conservation

In Tshaulu, floodline areas along river channels and watercourses generally remained undeveloped and continued to function as part of the integrated open space system, contributing to flood management and environmental sustainability.

Public open spaces and floodline areas along watercourses were generally preserved and remained undeveloped, contributing to flood risk management and ecological sustainability in Mukula/Khubvi/Makonde node.

In Vhufuli node, Wetlands, streams and watercourses generally remained undeveloped and integrated into the municipal open space system, preserving

ecological functions. Tshikombani area significantly faces floods during heavy rainfalls which shows that the municipality has failed to provide drainage systems that can support structures within these areas.

Agriculture

Agricultural land around Tshaulu was largely retained for agricultural and complementary uses, with limited conversion to non-agricultural land uses. Prime agricultural land was generally conserved, and residential extensions into agricultural areas were controlled and restricted.

The agricultural potential of the Luvuvhu River was partially utilised through small-scale and subsistence farming activities, with growing recognition of the need for sustainable water use practices.

In Mukula/Khubvi/Makonde node, land uses within agricultural zones remained predominantly agricultural or tourism-related, with limited non-compliant development. The limited prime agricultural land to the south of Dopeni and north of Shanzha, along the southern banks of the Nzhelele River has been protected from further development footprint.

Tshixwadza nodal point still has grazing land, which is an achievement as they have maintained this land. Small scale agriculture activities along the banks of the Langwe River were optimized and conducted in an environmentally sustainable manner to prevent erosion.

Small Scale Mining

Sand mining and related activities were subject to regulatory oversight, with consents required from the relevant authorities, helping to limit uncontrolled





environmental degradation throughout TLM. Moreover, regulatory oversight measures contribute to better environmental management and reduced land-use conflict between TLM and Traditional Councils or Authorities.

Tourism

TLM within VDM achieved modest but strategic tourism-related progress. The Mphaphuli Nature Reserve, Lake Fundudzi continued to function as a key tourism asset together with Nandoni Dam and Thathe Vondo Dam, with potential increasingly recognised in municipal and local planning frameworks. Opportunities for eco-tourism linked to the mountainous landscapes in SDA such as Tshaulu, Tshixwadza, Tshilamba were identified and partially explored, mainly through low-impact, community-based and nature-oriented activities.





3.8 THULAMELA PROJECTS (CATALYTIC PROJECTS AND OTHER PROJECTS) FROM 2016 TO 2025

From 2015 to 2026, TLM implemented a large-scale, multi-year infrastructure and service delivery programme aimed at improving basic services, transport connectivity, and social infrastructure across various areas which then strengthen rural-urban linkages, bridging the rural-urban divide, thereby aligning with the vision of TLM becoming a city in 2030. For TLM to become a city, economic infrastructure provision will be required in various nodes identified. These projects (catalytic and other) have been strategically aligned to the TLM IDP, TLM SDBIP, TLM SDF under Review and TLM LED objectives, focusing on inclusive development, spatial integration, and economic opportunity creation and investments.

A core pillar of these projects has been rural and urban electrification, which delivered household connections, street lighting, and high-mast lighting to villages and urban areas within TLM. Moreover, these projects significantly improved public safety, household wellbeing, and business activities, especially in under-serviced areas.

The roads and transport projects represent the highest-value investment and the main driver of economic impact. Major projects include the Khoroni–Univen–Maungani Road (R100m+, completed), which improved access to the Univen and surrounding communities or residential area; The Ha-Makhuvha Ring Road (97% completed), strengthens regional integration for villages such as Phiphidi, Lunungwi, Tshinapfene, Ha-Makhuvha ; The UIF to Shell Garage Road (97% completed), improves traffic flow and improves the lower parts of Thohoyandou CBD/Thohoyandou BA; and the Mapate and Lwamondo Territorial Council Access Road (mid-progress), expanding connectivity and access in Lwamondo .These projects reduced travel times, improved

access to healthcare and education facilities, and thus supporting the movement of goods and services.

Flagship social and community infrastructure projects further enhanced the municipality's development profile. The Tshilamba Art Centre (99% completed) stands as a key cultural and tourism asset, while Makwarela Stadium (Phases 1 and 2, completed), the Makonde Sports Facility (95% completed) and other completed sports facilities support youth development, sports participation, and community events.

In addition, major investments in waste management and public facilities, including the Gundani Landfill site and Thohoyandou Landfill site upgrades, along with extensive fencing, community halls, and municipal facility improvements, strengthened environmental management and service efficiency.

Overall, most projects delivered between 2016 and 2025/2026 financial year are fully completed, with the current phase (2024–2026) focused on finalizing high-impact regional roads and flagship community facilities. These projects has substantially improved quality of life, regional accessibility, public safety, and the municipality's capacity to attract investments, thereby, laying a strong foundation for sustainable LED and long-term spatial growth.

Legislative and Policy Framework:

Economic infrastructure and social infrastructure planning and provision within TLM are informed by the following instruments:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, Schedule 4B): Assigns infrastructure provision as a municipal function while recognising differentiated institutional arrangements.





- Integrated Energy Plan (2013): Provides national guidance on energy supply, demand, and long-term planning.
- Electricity Regulation Act (2006): Regulates electricity generation, transmission, and distribution.
- Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA, 2013): Requires alignment between spatial development and infrastructure capacity.
- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Identifies reliable economic infrastructure as a prerequisite for economic growth and social development.
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF, 2022): Positions economic infrastructure as a key spatial development lever.
- Limpopo Spatial Development Framework (LSDF, 2025): Emphasises economic infrastructure strengthening to support settlement, nodes, corridors and economic development.
- Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) 2025–2030: Prioritises infrastructure investment, and renewable energy expansion.





Table 26: Thulamela Projects Completed and Ongoing 2016 – 2025/2026

PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
1. Tshixwadza Sports Facility	R9 817 912.49	Completed, taken over from Mutale LM	2016-2017
2. Tshilamba Park	R3 000 000.00	Completed, taken over from Mutale LM	2016-2017
3. Gundani Landfill	R5 700 000.00	Completed, taken over from Mutale LM	2016-2017
4. Makwarela Stadium Upgrading	R42 000 000.00	Completed	2016-2017
5. Unit A Masala + Tomboni Streets and Mphaphuli Territorial Council Road	R46 068 000.00	Completed	2016-2017
6. Thohoyandou Unit C (Miluwani) Streets Phase 1 (6.3km	R63 000 000.00	Completed	2016-2017
7. Vhufulwi Tshirekeke Electrification 300	R4 620 000.00	Completed	2016-2017
8. Tshamavhudzi Electrification 15	R507 555.33	Completed	2016-2017
9. Lufule Electrification 70	R1 584 442.82	Completed	2016-2017
10. Dumasi Electrification 505	R6 234 472.90	Completed	2016-2017
11. Vondwe Electrification 56	R769 678.43	Completed	2016-2017
12. Dopeni Mapango Electrification 90	R2 373 903.03	Completed	2016-2017
13. Makhuvha Ndarieni Electrification 261	R4 491 126.64	Completed	2016-2017
14. Khalavha Electrification 78	R1 763 268.28	Completed	2016-2017
15. Gondeni Tshilaphala Electrification 73	R1 330 482.92	Completed	2016-2017
16. Lwamondo Vhungwili Electrification 75	R1 355 086.35	Completed	2016-2017
17. Fondwe Electrification 57	R884 314.58	Completed	2016-2017
18. Duthuni Electrification 62	R954 800.00	Completed	2016-2017





PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
19. Tshivhulani Electrification 180	R3 945 928.69	Completed	2016-2017
20. Maniini Electrification 179	R2 756 600.00	Completed	2016-2017
21. Tshilungoma Electrification 100	R1 377 153.27	Completed	2016-2017
22. Bunzhe Electrification 261	R4 373 600.00	Completed	2016-2017
23. Siambe Electrification 120	R1 570 800.00	Completed	2016-2017
24. Thononda Electrification 100	R1 832 600.00	Completed	2016-2017
25. Dzingahe Electrification 75	R1 162 500.00	Completed	2016-2017
26. Highmast Installation (Tshifulanani, Tshiulungoma, Makonde)	R1 422 200.16	Completed	2016-2017
27. Energy Efficiency	R7 852 149.00	Completed	2016-2017
28. Makonde Sports Facility. Retender	R34 636 143.71	Completed	2017-2018
29. Tshixwadza Sports Facility Slope Protection	R3 687 000.00	Completed	2017-2018
30. Gundani Landfill	R5 700 000.00	Completed	2017-2018
31. Tshidimbini Electrification 50	R781 798.25	Completed	2018-2019
32. Tshilungwi Electrification 60	R938 157.89	Completed	2018-2019
33. Tshikhudini Electrification 70	R1 094 517.54	Completed	2018-2019
34. Matsika Electrification 80	R1 250 877.19	Completed	2018-2019
35. Dopeni Mapango Electrification 70	R1 094 517.54	Completed	2018-2019
36. Lwamondo Makambe Electrification 85	R1 329 057.02	Completed	2018-2019
37. Tshivhilwi Electrification 70	R1 094 517.54	Completed	2018-2019





PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
38. Mvelaphanda Electrification 48	R750 526.32	Completed	2018-2019
39. Makhuvha Tshilivho Electrification 270	R4 221 710.53	Completed	2018-2019
40. Itsani Siawoodza & Tshivhuyuni Electrification 78	R1 219 605.26	Completed	2018-2019
41. Mutoti Electrification 100	R1 563 596.49	Completed	2018-2019
42. Makhuvha Ndarieni Phase2 Electrification 100	R1 650 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
43. Tshivhulani Phase2 Electrification 100	R1 650 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
44. Malavuwe Phase2 Electrification 100	R1 650 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
45. Ngudza Electrification 70	R1 155 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
46. Ha.Khakhu Electrification 130	R2 145 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
47. Duthuni Phase2 Electrification 89	R1 468 500.00	Completed	2018-2019
48. Vhufuli Tshireke Phase2 Electrification 100	R1 650 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
49. Tshandama Electrification 47	R775 500.00	Completed	2018-2019
50. Mavhode Electrification 116	R1 914 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
51. Dzwerani Ha.Mapholi Electrification 302	R4 983 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
52. Tshisaulu Electrification 150	R2 475 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
53. Tshivhilwi Phase2 Electrification 60	R990 000.00	Completed	2018-2019
54. Highmast Installation (Mukula and Matatshe) 2	R889 054.31	Completed	2018-2019





PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
55. Mphego Electrification 105	R1 890 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
56. Gogogo Electrification 50	R900 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
57. Ha.Lambani Electrification 140	R2 520 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
58. Tshirenzheni Extension Electrification 70	R1 260 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
59. Tshirenke Mathithi Electrification 75	R1 350 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
60. Ngovhela Tshiwamusevhe Electrification 100	R1 800 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
61. Tshilivho Extension Electrification	R2 268 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
62. Duthuni Ratshiedana Electrification	R1 080 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
63. Back-up generator (Indoor Sports Centre)	R678 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
64. Back-up generator (Thohoyandou stadium)	R682 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
65. Makonde Sports Facility. Retender	R34 636 143.71	Completed	2020-2021
66. Makwarela Stadium Phase2	R15 500 000.00	Completed	2020-2021
67. Thohoyandou Landfill Cell	R3 412 881.42	Completed	2020-2021
68. Tshikombani Testing Station	R31 725 752.98	Completed	2020-2021
69. Khoroni to Univen to Maungani Road	R100 920 198.00 97%	Completed	2020-2021
70. Donald Frazer Hospital Trading Area Development	R7 000 000.00 92%	Completed	2020-2021
71. Tswinga Dambuwo Electrification 400	R7 200 000.00	Completed	2021-2022
72. Muledane / Itsani Electrification 150	R2 700 000.00	Completed	2021-2022
73. Ha.Lambani Electrification 250	R4 500 000.00	Completed	2021-2022





PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
74. Tshilungoma Electrification 78	R1 404 000.00	Completed	2021-2022
75. Tshififi Electrification 200	R3 600 000.00	Completed	2021-2022
76. Mangodi / Sidou Electrification 200	R3 600 000.00	Completed	2021-2022
77. Streetlights at Thohoyandou G N/A	R3 849 790.06	Completed	2021-2022
78. Highmast x 3 at Thohoyandou E N/A	R1 477 807.50	Completed	2021-2022
79. Highmast x 2 at Thohoyandou C N/A	R937 250.00	Completed	2021-2022
80. Thohoyandou Unit N Service Roads	R98 152 481.00	Completed	2021-2022
81. Makwarela Extension 3 Streets Phase2	R114 726 393.00	Completed	2021-2022
82. Ha.Lambani Bridges	R21 595 113.00	Completed	2021-2022
83. Tshindongana Bashasha Low Level Bridge	R23 744 376.50	Completed	2021-2022
84. Mukumbani Access Road	R51 146 553.60	Completed	2021-2022
85. Tshilamba Streets Phase 3	R62 715 067.18	Completed	2021-2022
86. Thohoyandou J (Muledane) Streets Phase 1	R42 870 536.07	Completed	2021-2022
87. Thohoyandou N (Muledane) Service Road	R98 878 993.99	Completed	2021-2022
88. Khoroni Univen Maungani Road	R99 955 946.51	Completed	2021-2022
89. Donald Frazer Hospital Trading Area Development	R8 259 027.40	Completed	2021-2022
90. Mukumbani Access Road	R56 723 432.06	Completed	2021-2022
91. Thohoyandou J (Muledane) Streets Phase 1	R42 870 536.07	Completed	2021-2022





PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
92.10 Donald Frazer Hospital Trading Area Development	R7 000 000.00	Completed	2021-2022
93. Tshilamba Streets Phase 3	R62 715 067.18	Completed	2021-2022
94. Thengwe Tshilamba Road Repairs (Disaster Project)	R8 000 037.17	Completed	2021-2022
95. Tshikombani Access Road Repairs (Disaster Project)	R10 000 000.00	Completed	2021-2022
96. Tswinga Electrification 120	R2 400 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
97. Lunungwi Gondeni Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
98. Makhuvha Khwathiseni Electrification 140	R2 800 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
99. Ha-Luvhimbi Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
100. Ha-Lambani Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
101. Tshamulungwi Electrification 80	R1 600 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
102. Mudunungu Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
103. Thengwe Madzivhanani Electrification 90	R1 800 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
104. Tshamutora Electrification 20	R400 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
105. Itsani Maguluvheni Electrification 20	R400 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
106. Tshithuthuni Electrification 50	R1 000 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
107. Tshamutora Feeder Line N/A	R3 800 000.00	Completed	2022-2023





PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
108. Highmast at Tshikundamalema N/A	R500 951.50	Completed	2022-2023
109. Highmast at Makuya N/A	R500 951.50	Completed	2022-2023
110. Highmast at Phunda Maria Madzivhandila Cross N/A	R498 881.50	Completed	2022-2023
111. Highmast at Thohoyandou Q N/A	R500 951.50	Completed	2022-2023
112. Highmast at Donald Frazer N/A	R500 951.50	Completed	2022-2023
113. Highmast at Mapitas N/A	R541 650.00	Completed	2022-2023
114. Highmast at Tshaulu N/A	R500 951.50	Completed	2022-2023
115. Streetlights from Sibasa Garage to Hayani Hospital N/A	R4 893 183.00	Completed	2022-2023
116. Makwarela Extension 3 Streets Phase 1	R119 324 266.73	Completed	2022-2023
117. Ha-Lambani Bridges	R21 285 026.22	Completed	2022-2023
118. Tshindongana Bashasha Low Level Bridge	R21 595 072.96	Completed	2022-2023
119. Thengwe Tshilamba Road Repairs (Disaster Project)	R8 000 037.17	Completed	2022-2023
120. Tshilamba Mechanical Workshop	R5 500 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
121. Mutale Hall Fencing	R1 700 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
122. Mutale Ablution Block	R1 500 000.00	Completed	2022-2023





PROJECT NAME		AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
123.	Thohoyandou Stadium Perimeter Fence	R5 000 000.00	Completed	2022-2023
124.	Tshivhilwi Electrification 120	R2 400 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
125.	Phiphidi / Sidou Electrification 24	R480 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
126.	Tshifudi Phase 3 Electrification 200	R4 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
127.	Tshidongololwe Electrification 60	R1 200 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
128.	Tshiavha Ngovhela / Sidou Electrification 30	R600 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
129.	Tshififi Electrification 170	R3 400 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
130.	Tshapasha Pile Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
131.	Thononda Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
132.	Tshivhiliidulu Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
133.	Mangondi Sidou Electrification 40	R800 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
134.	Mandala Electrification 60	R1 200 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
135.	Malavuwe Electrification 60	R1 200 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
136.	Mudunungwi Lunungwi Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
137.	Jimmy Kone Electrification 100	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
138.	Dopeni Electrification 96	R1 920 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
139.	Vhutsavha Electrification 50	R1 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
140.	Mutale Offices Solar System N/A	R9 487 921.03	Completed	2023-2024





PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
141. Streetlights from JJ Motors to Sibasa N/A	R5 950 446.16	Completed	2023-2024
142. Streetlights from Sibasa to Tshikevha N/A	R5 576 727.90	Completed	2023-2024
143. Highmast at Thohoyandou Q N/A	R1 136 200.00	Completed	2023-2024
144. Highmast at Tshikombani N/A	R1 136 200.00	Completed	2023-2024
145. Highmast at Thohoyandou M N/A	R1 136 200.00	Completed	2023-2024
146. Highmast at Tshitereke Camp N/A	R1 136 200.00	Completed	2023-2024
147. Highmast at Tshidongololwe N/A	R948 002.50	Completed	2023-2024
148. Mukumbani Access Road	R68 770 877.91	Completed	2023-2024
149. Thohoyandou J (Muledane) Streets Phase 1	R44 285 066.57	Completed	2023-2024
150. Thohoyandou Landfill Boundary Wall	R9 192 637.00	Completed	2023-2024
151. Mbaleni Cemetery Fence	R9 951 514.36	Completed	2023-2024
152. Mutale Hall Paving	R2 996 670.00	Completed	2023-2024
153. Thulamela Municipality Clearview Fence	R994 002.50	Completed	2023-2024
154. Makonde Stadium Parameter Fence	R9 120 837.06	Completed	2023-2024
155. Lunungwi Road (Disaster Project)	R3 500 000.00	Completed	2023-2024





PROJECT NAME		AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
156.	Mudzidzidzi Vhotalu Road & Culvert (Disaster Project)	R5 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
157.	Tshiwani Road & Culvert (Disaster Project)	R5 500 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
158.	Khalavha Besekuwe Road (Disaster Project)	R4 500 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
159.	Tshanzhe Mukondeni Lamvi Road (Disaster Project)	R3 000 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
160.	19 Ha-Manyuha Access Road (Disaster Project)	R6 500 000.00	Completed	2023-2024
161.	Tshilavulu Electrification 148	R3 617 000.00	Completed	2024-2025
162.	Mukoma wa Bani / Ha-Luvhimbi Electrification 41	R1 000 000.00	Completed	2024-2025
163.	Munangwe Electrification 82	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2024-2025
164.	Khubvi Electrification 163	R4 000 000.00	Completed	2024-2025
165.	Ha-Luvhimbi Electrification 82	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2024-2025
166.	Ha-Makhuvha Electrification 82	R2 000 000.00	Completed	2024-2025
167.	Tshilamba Streets Phase 3	R65 591 388.83	Completed	2024-2025
168.	Thohoyandou K & K Portion Streets Phase 1	R93 480 059.98	Completed	2024-2025





PROJECT NAME		AMOUNT	STATUS	YEAR
169.	Thononda Electrification 100	R2 570 000.00	Site has been established, they are now Pegging and preparing the planting of poles.	2025-2026
170.	Tshidongololwe Electrification 100	R2 570 000.00	Site has been established, they are now Pegging and preparing the planting of poles.	2025-2026
171.	Tshifudi Electrification 60	R1 541 000.00	Site has been established, they are now Pegging and preparing the planting of poles.	2025-2026
172.	Tshilamba Art Centre	R54 495 712.58	99% completed	2025-2026
173.	Ha-Makhuvha Ring Road 3	R119 099 255.00	97% completed	2025-2026
174.	Thohoyandou K to L Link Road	R44 662 625.57	83% completed	2025-2026
175.	UIF to Shell Garage Road	R70 961 862.89	97% completed	2025-2026
176.	Lwamondo Territorial Council Access Road	R131 650 672.35	33% completed	2025-2026
177.	Mapate Access Road	R123 538 428.00	41% completed	2025-2026





3.9. TLM OUTCOMES, KEY SPATIAL THEMES AND PERFORMANCE INDEX

Table 27: The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) for Thulamela Local Municipality (TLM) as one of the intermediate City Municipalities (ICMs) aims to manage urban growth and development effectively

IUDF Lever	Linked SDGs	NSDF 2022 Key Spatial Themes / Priorities	LSDF 2025 Key Spatial Themes / Priorities	MTDP Priorities	TLM SDF Key Spatial Themes / Priorities
1. Integrated Urban Planning & Management	SDG 11, 9, 13	Place-based planning; densification; transforming spatial patterns; urban nodes & regional integration.	Sequencing of land development; alignment of municipal & district SDFs; spatial structure of growth-points in Limpopo.	Spatial Transformation & Integrated Development; Building Inclusive Growth Corridors	Alignment with VDM SDF, LSDF and the NSDF; Industrial development, Innovation development centres and Economic infrastructure provision; Determination of the Urban Edge; Rural – Urban open spaces; Mixed-Use Densification in urban and rural areas along major activity spines.
2. Integrated Transport & Mobility	SDG 9, 11	Corridors; connectivity between urban nodes; infrastructure networks including transport.	Identifying mobility corridors; ensuring transport infrastructure supports spatial form; linking growth points.	Expanding Public Transport Systems; Enhancing Connectivity & Accessibility	Corridor based development (i.e., P277/1); upgrading of activity spines enhancing connectivity & accessibility thorough integrated public transportation; Public/Pedestrian infrastructure, and improved road connectivity aligned with SDAs.
3. Integrated & Sustainable Human Settlements	SDG 1, 10, 11	Equitable access to services; inclusion; better location of social services; redress spatial inequality.	Ensuring settlements are located in areas with appropriate services; upgrading; ensuring settlements align with infrastructure investment in Limpopo.	Affordable Housing Development; Upgrading Informal Settlements; Spatial Integration	Implementation of PHSHDAs (affordable housing); Formalization and Economic Infrastructure upgrades; Green Infrastructure and Climate resilient designs; Mixed-Income Housing, and integration of social facilities to reduce spatial





IUDF Lever	Linked SDGs	NSDF 2022 Key Spatial Themes / Priorities	LSDF 2025 Key Spatial Themes / Priorities	MTDP Priorities	TLM SDF Key Spatial Themes / Priorities
					inequality and long travelling distances.
4. Integrated Urban Infrastructure	SDG 6, 7, 9	Prioritizing infrastructure investment; ensuring basic services reach underserved areas; aligning infrastructure with spatial form.	Limpopo's SDF stresses infrastructure sequencing; provision of services (water, sanitation, energy) as spatial enabler.	Infrastructure-led Development; Expanding Energy Access; Ensuring Universal Basic Services	Economic infrastructure linkages, provision and upgrades; Green Energy and Infrastructure as well as Climate resilient designs; Innovation development centres; Urban densification and recreational facilities.
5. Efficient Land Governance & Management	SDG 1, 11, 15	Land use management; secure tenure; spatial justice; rural-urban land relationships; optimizing land for value.	Limpopo's effort to align land development policies with the provincial SDF; district/municipal SDFs aligning to provincial; land use controls.	Land Reform & Spatial Justice; Secure Tenure & Land Use Management	Formalization (security of tenure and optimizing land value); Rural – Urban linkages forstoring Land Use Management Systems between TLM and TA; Alignment between traditional authorities and municipal planning to ensure spatial justice, efficient land release, and sustainable urban expansion.
6. Inclusive Economic Development	SDG 8, 9, 10	NSDF promotes economic nodes, growth points, rural economies, corridor development, leveraging spatial structure for economic inclusion.	LSDF identifies growth points, special economic zones or nodes; emphasizing economic infrastructure in Limpopo.	Job Creation & Economic Diversification; Promoting SMMEs & Township Economies	Economic diversification; Industrial development (manufacturing and agro-processing), Township Economies and Innovation development centres; Stratergic Development Areas (SDAs) identification, Corridor based development and upgrading; Cross-Border trade opportunities through targeted economic nodes and corridor-based development.





IUDF Lever	Linked SDGs	NSDF 2022 Key Spatial Themes / Priorities	LSDF 2025 Key Spatial Themes / Priorities	MTDP Priorities	TLM SDF Key Spatial Themes / Priorities
7. Empowered Active Communities	SDG 16, 5	Community participation in spatial planning; equitable service delivery; inclusion and participation.	Provinces emphasise local alignment; district & municipal SDFs responsive to community needs; mechanisms for public participation in LSDF.	Social Cohesion & Nation Building; Community Empowerment & Participation	Inclusive Public Participation; Improved Basic Service Delivery provision; Focus on Traditional Council structures to co-produce spatial development outcomes and strengthen social cohesion.
8. Effective Urban Governance	SDG 16, 17	NSDF 2022 sets expectations for alignment of plans (national, provincial and local); coordination across spheres; “shifts” required in planning, investment behaviour; accountability in spatial investment.	LSDF 2025 approval by provincial government; aligning District & Municipal spatial plans; governance for implementation.	Good Governance & Capable State; Improved Institutional Coordination	Improve intergovernmental and inter-municipal coordination within VDM, ensuring alignment between TLM SDF, VDM SDF, LSDF and NSDF priorities to support effective spatial planning and implementation.
9. Sustainable Finances	SDG 17, 8	NSDF emphasises financing infrastructure, targeting investment where spatial returns are high; guiding budget allocations spatially.	Limpopo’s alignment of budget & spatial plans; aligning provincial funding with spatial priorities; infrastructure sequencing based on feasibility & finance.	Fiscal Sustainability; Strengthening Local Government Finances	Public Private Partnerships (PPPs); Aligning national and provincial funding with spatial priorities; Prioritisation of municipal revenue generation





Table 28: Success in IUDF implementation can be measured through various indicators including:

Measure	Poor	Average	Good
Access: ➤ Ensuring that all residents have access to essential services and infrastructure.	X		
Growth: ➤ Monitoring urban expansion and development patterns.		X	
Governance: ➤ Assessing the effectiveness of local governance and public service delivery.		X	
Spatial Transformation: ➤ Evaluating the transformation of urban areas from rural areas to promote efficiency and sustainability.		X	

The status of municipalities is measured through various indicators and performance assessments and the Governance Performance Index (GPI) evaluates municipalities based on 40 indicators across four categories: Administration and Governance, Leadership and Management, Service Delivery, and Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

Table 29: Government Performance Index (GPI) for TLM

Government Performance Index (GPI)	Poor	Average	Good
Administration & Governance		X	
Leadership & Management		X	
Service Delivery	X		
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation		X	





4. SPATIAL PROPOSALS

In this phase, the review of the conceptual framework, spatial planning tools and strategies is underway, aligning with the spatial vision of the Municipality. The aim is to effectively tackle challenges and unlock developmental potential, as identified under the previous chapter. This exercise in spatial proposals will address various aspects in accordance with the development principles and relevant norms and standards outlined in Chapter 2 of SPLUMA, Act 16 of 2013.

4.1 VISION AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The following vision was adopted for the TLM:

“To promote integrated urban and rural development whilst encouraging local economic development in order to improve the quality of lives of our people”.

The mission statement of the vision is:

We build prosperity, eradicate poverty and promote social, political and economic empowerment of all our people through delivery of quality services, community participation, local economic development and smart administration”.

TLM municipal goals for the Key Performance Areas (KPA) are:

1. Good Governance and Public Participation
Goal: To improve Good Governance and Public Participation.
2. Municipal Transformation and Organisational Development.
Goal: To improve the productivity of all personnel in rendering services to the customers.

3. Basic Infrastructure and Service Delivery

Goal: To improve access to basic services and infrastructure of all households in the municipal area.

4. Local Economic Development

Goal: To ensure viable and sustainable economic growth within the municipal area.

5. Municipal Financial Viability and Management

Goal: To improve the management of the financial resources of TLM

4.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE TLM VISION

Achieving City Status by 2030

TLM Vision 2030 seeks to transform the Thohoyandou – Sibasa Strategic SDA into a functional and sustainable city by 2030. TLM adapted Vision is firmly aligned with the IUDF, 2016 and its nine policy levers, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the NSDF, 2022, the LSDF 2025, the Vhembe District SDF, and the TLM SDF and MTDP. The transformation agenda is structured around nine interrelated pillars.

First, spatial transformation through integrated urban planning focuses on restructuring apartheid spatial patterns by promoting mixed-use densification along activity spines, defining and managing the urban edge, strengthening rural–urban open spaces, and aligning municipal spatial plans across spheres of government to ensure compact growth, reduced travel distances, climate resilience and improved access to services.





Second, corridor-based mobility and connectivity prioritizes development along the P277/1 mobility corridor, upgrading key activity spines, integrating public transport systems, and enhancing pedestrian and non-motorised transport infrastructure to support economic nodes and strengthen linkages between Thohoyandou, Sibasa and surrounding rural settlements.

Third, sustainable and inclusive human settlements promote the implementation of PSHSDAs, formalization of informal settlements, mixed-income housing developments, integration of social facilities within neighbourhoods, and climate-resilient green infrastructure designs to reduce spatial inequality and long commuting distances.

Fourth, infrastructure-led development positions bulk infrastructure investment, expanded energy access including green energy, upgraded economic infrastructure, innovation development centres, and recreational and public facilities as spatial enablers aligned with densification and strategic nodes to maximize spatial returns.

Fifth, efficient land governance and rural–urban integration aims to strengthen land formalization and tenure security, align Traditional Authorities/Councils with municipal planning systems, enhance land use management mechanisms, and coordinate land release for sustainable urban expansion in order to promote spatial justice and optimize land value.

Sixth, inclusive and diversified economic development seeks to establish the SDA as a regional economic engine through industrial development in manufacturing and agro-processing, revitalization of township economies,

establishment of innovation centres, designation of SDAs, corridor-based economic upgrading, and cross-border trade opportunities to support job creation and SMME growth.

Seventh, empowered and active communities are fostered through inclusive public participation, strengthened traditional council partnerships, improved service delivery responsiveness, and community co-production of spatial development outcomes to enhance social cohesion and democratic planning.

Eighth, effective and coordinated urban governance emphasizes improved intergovernmental coordination within VDM, alignment of spatial development frameworks across all spheres, strengthened institutional capacity, and improved accountability in spatial investment decisions.

Ninth, sustainable municipal finances are promoted through public-private partnerships (PPPs), strategic infrastructure financing, alignment of national and provincial funding with spatial priorities, and enhanced municipal revenue generation, ensuring that investment is targeted where spatial returns are highest. Collectively, these pillars aim to ensure that by 2030 the Thohoyandou – Sibasa SDA will function as a compact and well-connected urban system, an inclusive economic hub for TLM and VDM, a climate-resilient and infrastructure-enabled city, and a model of rural–urban integration governed through strong partnerships between TLM and Traditional Authorities/Councils.

TLM Vision 2030 aims to transform the Thohoyandou–SDA into a functional and sustainable city by 2030. This transformation is not focused only on high-rise buildings or mega infrastructure investments alone, but rather on creating





a liveable, sustainable, and inclusive urban environment, which are then surrounded by sustainable and functional rural areas.

Key planning themes include:

- Enhancing sustainable rural-urban liveability and sustainability through integrated socio-economic and environmental development.
- Rehabilitating and managing urban growth to address urban decay, rural-urban sprawl, and inefficient land use as well conflicting land uses in Thohoyandou, Sibasa together with Tshilamba SDAs.
- Implementing TLM SPLUM By-Laws, 2016 that balance urban development with comprehensive rural development, ensuring equitable growth in TLM.

In essence, the TLM vision promotes a spatially integrated, sustainable city-region where urban and rural development are strategic to improving the quality of life and environmental resilience. Moreover, this city – region is about the interdependent relationships between the urban centre (Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Tshilamba) and its surrounding areas or villages.

TLM seeks to evolve from being a predominantly rural settlement into an efficient and dynamic urban hub characterized by enhanced infrastructure, expanded economic prospects, and improved service delivery.

Achieving the City status encompasses both physical development in rural and urban areas [urban expansion, infrastructure investments, housing and

institutional advancement, including strengthened governance, increased investment attraction (tourism and agriculture), and greater TLM capacity].

4.2.1 Promote Urban Regeneration

- Revitalising established urban centres such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa, and Tshilamba through infrastructure upgrades, improved land-use management that addresses conflicting land uses, and enhanced service delivery, while also prioritising the reduction of existing service delivery backlogs within these areas.
- Promoting the sustainable restructuring of urban areas by addressing challenges such as aging water and sanitation infrastructure, the growth of informal settlements on urban peripheries, and uncontrolled urban sprawl, to create more efficient, resilient, and well-planned towns.

4.2.2 Comprehensive Rural Development

- Promoting inclusive rural development by ensuring equitable access to essential services such as water, sanitation, electricity, and road infrastructure within villages and rural settlements.
- Promoting comprehensive rural development by strengthening agriculture, tourism, and agro-processing as key economic drivers. This involves improving infrastructure to support these sectors, enhancing market access and value-chain integration, encouraging sustainable land use practices.





- Fostering local enterprise development to create employment opportunities and stimulate inclusive rural economies in SDAs like Tshaulu, Makonde, Khubvi, Vhufuli and so forth.
- Promoting and supporting small-scale mining activities including sand mining, surface mining, and stone crushing in areas such as Tshixwadza, Makuya, Mukula, Tshaulu, and so forth, to stimulate local economic growth while ensuring environmental sustainability and regulatory compliance as per NEMA and other environmental legislation.
- Enhancing spatial integration by strengthening connectivity between urban centres and rural settlements through strategic infrastructure investments and the provision of accessible public and social facilities.

4.2.3 Encouraging Local Economic Development (LED)

- Leveraging local resources including land, agricultural potential, cultural heritage, and tourism assets to stimulate job creation and support the growth of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs). This approach aims to strengthen the TLM economic base by promoting value addition, sustainable resource management, and community-driven development.
- In parallel, the development of strategically located industrial and commercial nodes in Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Tshilamba will help diversify the local economy, attract investments, and enhance TLM competitiveness.
- Furthermore, empowering communities through active participation in planning, development projects, and local economic initiatives will

foster social inclusion, build local capacity, and ensure that development outcomes are equitable and sustainable.

4.2.4 Improving the Quality of Life

- The overarching goal extends beyond the expansion of economic/physical infrastructure to encompass holistic human development. This includes improving access to adequate housing, quality education, reliable healthcare, recreational facilities, and sustainable employment opportunities that enhance the overall quality of life.
- The vision is to build an inclusive, resilient, and well-balanced TLM where both urban and rural spaces benefit equitably from growth and development. By promoting spatial integration, social cohesion, and sustainable economic opportunities, TLM aims to create a thriving environment that supports long-term prosperity and well-being for all residents.

TLM, vision, as articulated in the TLMSDF under Review, articulates a bold aspiration to transform the TLM into a vibrant, fully fledged city by the year 2030.

This vision extends beyond a mere change in administrative status and it represents a comprehensive commitment to guided urban transformation, strengthened governance, and sustainable spatial and economic development.

TLM transformation agenda is rooted in the principles of spatial justice, sustainability, and inclusivity, aiming to reshape TLM into a well-structured





urban system that balances economic growth with environmental stewardship and social equity.

Central to this vision is a strong focus on urban regeneration, particularly within existing urban centres (Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshilamba) and other SDAs (Tshaulu, Tshixwadza, etc.). This involves the refurbishments of aging infrastructure, enhancement of service delivery systems, and the implementation of efficient and integrated land-use management strategies.

Furthermore, TLM vision aspires to build a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable city by 2030. Through targeted interventions, it further aims to strengthen the Thohoyandou-Sibasa and Tshilamba urban core, to attract investments, and create a functional and competitive urban environment that fosters sustainable livelihoods and long-term economic growth.

At the same time, TLM is committed to comprehensive rural development ensuring that villages and dispersed villages have equitable access to essential services, agricultural support, tourism opportunities, and improved connectivity. By harnessing its local resources, including agriculture, cultural heritage, and tourism potential, TLM seeks to stimulate job creation, empower communities, and enhance local economic resilience.

Central to this vision is a people-centred approach that prioritises improved housing, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities while bridging the urban - rural divide.

The TLM SDF under Review emphasizes principles of spatial justice, sustainability, and efficient land-use management. Key objectives include protecting environmentally sensitive areas, promoting equitable access to land and services, encouraging compact urban development through the establishment of an Urban Edge, and enhancing integration between urban and rural areas. Moreover, it also prioritizes economic growth, infrastructure investment, and community participation, in alignment with national and provincial legislation, including SPLUMA (2013).

These principles closely align with the NSDF, 2022 which focuses on spatial justice, sustainability, resilience, efficiency, and good governance, and with the LSDF, 2025, which emphasizes balanced rural – urban integration, protection of natural and agricultural resources, infrastructure-led development, and economic competitiveness. By adopting these aligned principles, the TLM SDF under Review ensures coordinated and vertically integrated planning across national, provincial, and municipal levels, reinforcing compact, inclusive, and sustainable spatial development.





Table 30: Developmental Principles

PRINCIPLES	KEY FOCUS AREAS	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
1. Environmental Sustainability & Resource Management	• Protection of environmentally sensitive areas including river systems, floodlines and ecological corridors across the municipality. • Conservation of high agricultural potential land in rural areas such as in Makonde, Khubvi, Thengwe, Lwamondo, Makuya and other surrounding farming zones. • Protection of conservation areas and tourism landscapes including the Makuya Nature Reserve and other natural heritage sites. • Integration of the municipal open space system to support biodiversity, environmental resilience and recreational opportunities.	Balanced urban growth and conservation, long-term food security, reduced environmental degradation, controlled urban sprawl.
2. Nodal Development & Urban–Rural Integration	• Strengthening of the primary economic nodes of Thohoyandou and Sibasa as the main administrative, commercial and service centres. • Strengthening and compacting of regional development anchors such as Tshilamba and Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi to support surrounding settlements • Development of local service centres, including Tshikombani, Lwamondo, Tshifudi/Gaba/Tshaulu, Tshixwadza and Makuya to improve access to services in rural areas. • Promotion of mixed-use activity corridors along key transport routes connecting these nodes.	Efficient service delivery, vibrant multi-functional centres, reduced spatial inequality, and stronger urban–rural linkages.
3. Infrastructure Investment & Connectivity	• Prioritisation of bulk infrastructure investment in major growth nodes such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa and emerging development areas. • Upgrading of key regional transport corridors including routes such as R523, R524 and P277/1 that connect major nodes and neighbouring municipalities. • Improvement of rural road linkages connecting villages to local service centres and regional nodes. • Integration of public transport facilities, taxi ranks and movement corridors within nodal areas.	Stimulated economic growth, improved accessibility within and beyond the municipality, enhanced tourism and trade.





PRINCIPLES	KEY FOCUS AREAS	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
4. Economic Development & Industrial Diversification	• Promotion of agriculture and agro-processing opportunities in rural development areas such as Makhuvha/Tshilivho and surrounding agricultural zones. • Strengthening tourism development linked to natural and cultural assets, including Makuya Nature Reserve and heritage sites across the municipality. • Support for small-scale businesses, informal trading and mixed-use economic activities within nodal areas and along activity corridors. • Facilitation of responsible mining and industrial activities in appropriate locations while ensuring environmental compliance.	Expanded economic base, job creation, responsible mining, increased private investment, and long-term economic resilience.
5. Human Settlement Development	• Formalisation and upgrading of informal settlements in rural villages across the municipality. • Densification and structured residential development within existing urban areas such as Thohoyandou and Sibasa. • Development of new residential areas through township establishment in identified growth zones. • Provision of social facilities, schools, healthcare and community infrastructure within nodal areas to support surrounding settlements.	Inclusive, well-planned settlements, improved living conditions, protection of sensitive areas, efficient land use.
6. Collaborative Planning & Knowledge Partnerships	• Strengthening collaboration between the municipality, traditional authorities, local communities and private sector stakeholders. • Partnerships with the University of Venda to support the University Town concept and knowledge-driven development. • Alignment of municipal spatial planning with provincial and national development programmes. • Promotion of participatory planning processes to support inclusive and community-driven development.	Strengthened governance, community participation, innovation-driven development, and improved policy alignment.





4.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the TLM SDF under Review presents a spatial vision that fosters ecological balance and sustainable development through the efficient organization of people, resources, and infrastructure. It identifies urban centres such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa, and Tshilamba as SDAs, promoting higher-density, mixed-use development to encourage a compact urban form and curb urban sprawl.

To strengthen strategic planning and guide investment effectively, a clearer classification of these centres into primary, secondary, and tertiary nodes is recommended to ensure balanced and coordinated growth.

The conceptual framework acknowledges the critical role of mobility routes in connecting rural and urban areas to improve accessibility and promote economic interaction within TLM. However, currently it lacks detailed strategies for integrating these mobility routes with public transportation networks and the economic corridors.

Strengthening key routes, such as the R524, R523, P277/1 and district roads (D3695, D3666, etc.,) could enhance connectivity and support the development of SDAs putting into consideration tourism as well as agriculture together with small scale mining.

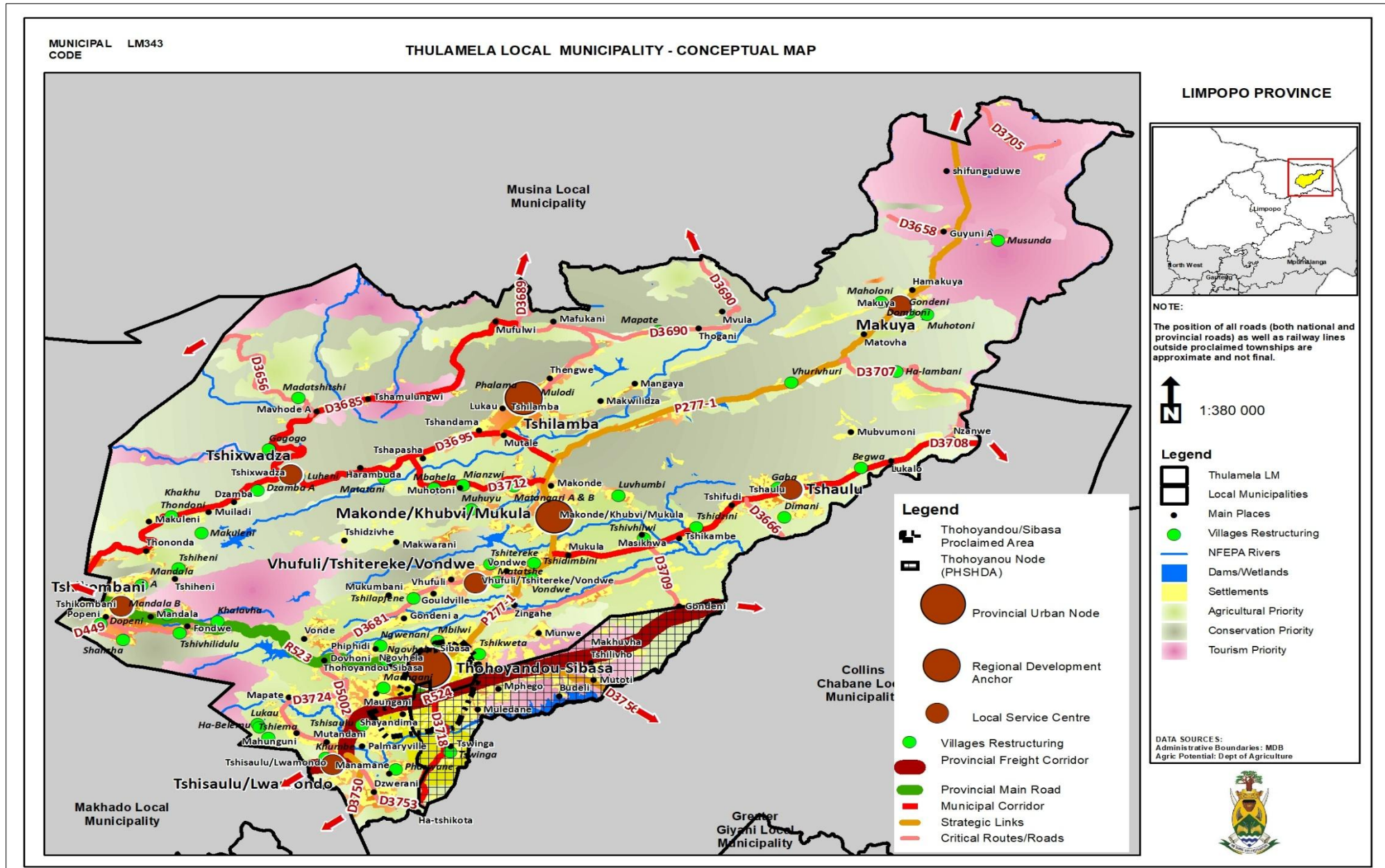
Environmentally, the framework appropriately designates prime agricultural lands and ecologically sensitive areas as “no-go zones,” in line with SPLUMA and NEMA principles.

However, the SDF under Review would benefit from detailed spatial mapping and the development of an EMF to guide land-use decisions, safeguard prime agricultural land, wetlands, and biodiversity corridors, and thereby enhance ecological integrity and food security.





Map 31: Conceptual Map







4.4 SPATIAL PLANNING TOOLS

4.4.1 Urban Edge Delineation and Management

The formal delineation and management of an Urban Edge is proposed to guide spatial growth, contain urban sprawl, and protect environmentally sensitive and agricultural land.

The urban edge functions as a spatial growth management boundary that directs urban development into defined areas where infrastructure investment, economic activity and higher-density settlement development can be supported. Areas located outside the urban edge will primarily remain rural in character and will be reserved for agricultural activities, conservation areas, tourism development, and rural residential settlements.

Within the urban edge, urban land uses including residential development, mixed-use activities, commercial development, and social infrastructure will be prioritised. Outside the urban edge, development will be managed in accordance with rural land use policies and environmental protection frameworks.

The SDF therefore proposes the establishment of a managed urban growth boundary for the Thohoyandou–Sibasa urban system, which functions as the primary urban core of the municipality.

4.4.1.1 Proposed Adjustment of the Thohoyandou–Sibasa Urban Edge

The SDF proposes the adjustment and expansion of the existing Thohoyandou–Sibasa urban edge in order to accommodate long-term population growth, increasing housing demand and economic development pressures within the municipality's primary urban node.

The proposed expansion area is located primarily to the south and south-west of the existing urban footprint, extending along the R524 corridor and the D3728 route, where development pressures are already emerging.

This expansion area has been identified as the most spatially suitable direction for growth due to:

- its contiguity with the existing urban footprint,
- its proximity to existing transport corridors, and
- the lower concentration of environmentally sensitive areas compared to eastern parts of the municipal area.

The proposed expansion will allow for the integration and formalisation of surrounding settlements, including areas such as Tswinga, where development has already occurred but where formal planning frameworks and infrastructure upgrades are required.





Table 31: Spatial Implications of the Proposed Urban Edge Adjustment

SPATIAL CONSIDERATION	PROPOSED SPATIAL INTERVENTION	PLANNING IMPLICATIONS
Urban Growth Direction	Urban expansion is proposed primarily south and south-west of Thohoyandou along the R524 and D3728 corridors.	Supports contiguous growth and prevents leapfrog development.
Settlement Integration	Integration and formalisation of surrounding settlements, including Tswinga and other peri-urban areas.	Enables upgrading of informal settlements and improved service delivery.
Land Ownership Context	Much of the surrounding land falls under traditional authority ownership with existing rural settlement patterns.	Requires coordination with Traditional Authorities and formalisation processes through township establishment or tenure upgrading programmes.
Development Status	Several areas within the expansion zone are already partially developed but lack approved general plans or township establishment.	Formal planning processes including surveying, general plans and township establishment will be required.
Infrastructure Capacity	Existing infrastructure networks require upgrading to support expansion.	Urban expansion must be phased and aligned with infrastructure investment programmes.
Environmental Constraints	Eastern areas contain sensitive environmental systems and river corridors.	Expansion should be prioritised southward and westward while protecting ecological systems.

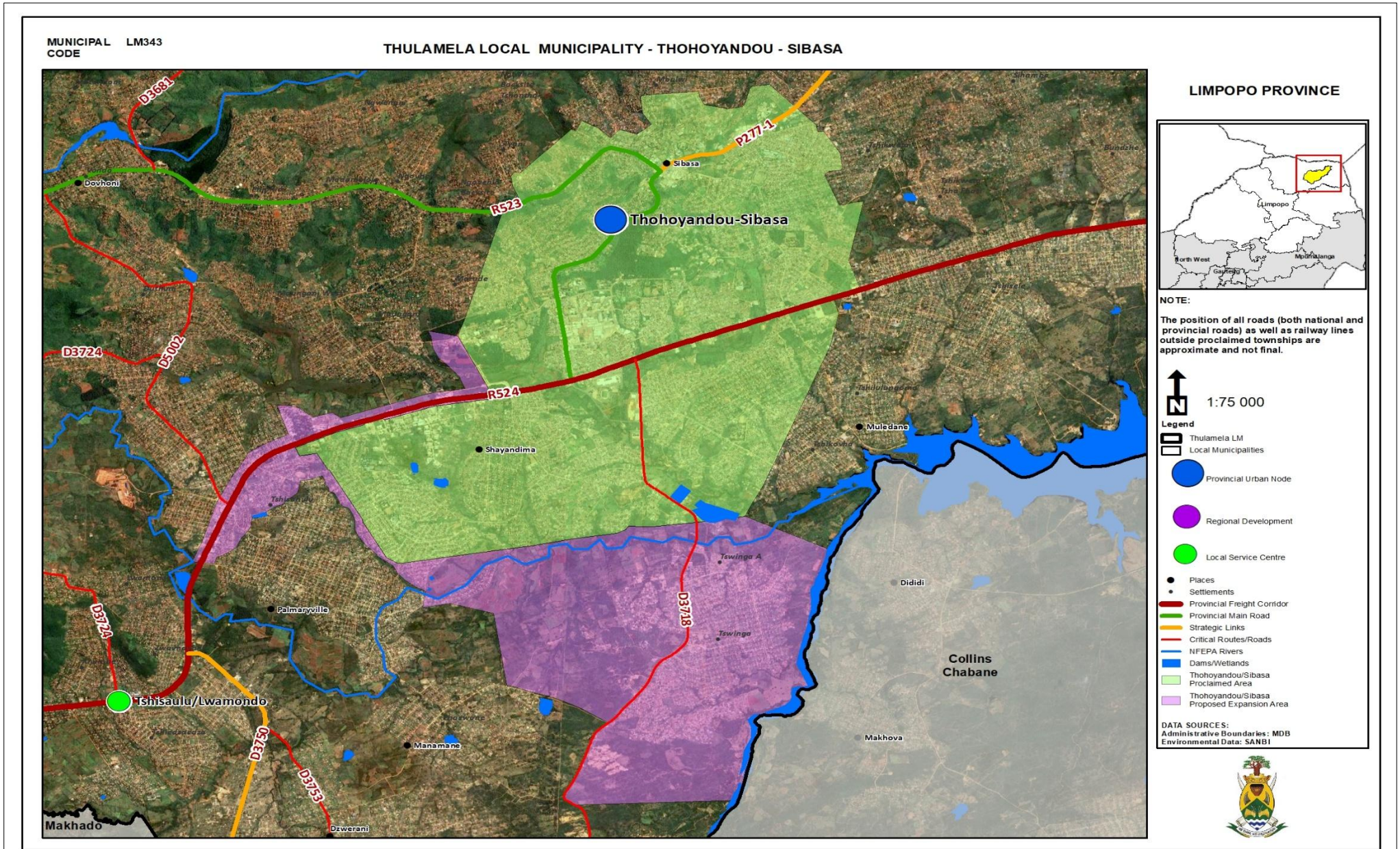
Table 32: Planning Motivation for Adjustment of the Urban Edge: Thohoyandou

ISSUES	DESCRIPTION	RECOMMENDED ACTION
Need for Urban Edge Adjustment	Increased population growth and housing demand within Thohoyandou.	Approve adjustment of the urban edge in principle.
Spatial Logic	Expansion area is contiguous and aligned with major transport routes.	Support structured and phased urban growth.
Service Delivery	Additional pressure on bulk infrastructure.	Promote densification and mixed-use development.
Land Use Management	Risk of inefficient land use if development is unmanaged.	Promote densification and mixed-use development.
Long-Term Growth	Need to protect rural and environmental land.	Establish a clear long-term urban edge beyond the expansion area.





Map 33: Thohoyandou/Sibasa Urban Edge





4.4.2 Densification, Formalisation and Infill Development

The densification and settlement consolidation strategy is proposed aimed at promoting compact settlement patterns and improving the efficiency of infrastructure investment across the municipality.

Densification and infill development will primarily be promoted within existing urban areas and strategic development nodes, particularly in Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshilamba, Lwamondo, Tshaulu and other areas highlighted within the different identified nodes. Within these areas, vacant land and underutilised properties should be prioritised for infill residential development, mixed-use activities and higher-density housing typologies.

Settlement Formalisation

The formalisation of existing informal settlements located on suitable land is proposed through structured planning interventions.

These interventions include:

- Surveying and preparation of General Plans
- Township establishment processes
- Provision of engineering infrastructure such as water, sanitation and roads
- Upgrading of tenure rights in consultation with Traditional Authorities

Settlement upgrading should prioritise areas located within the urban edge and near existing service centres, where infrastructure provision can be implemented efficiently.

4.4.3 Land Use and Transportation Integration

The integration of land use development with key transport corridors and mobility spines is proposed in order to strengthen accessibility and support public transport systems.

Development should therefore be concentrated along major movement corridors, including: R524 corridor (Thohoyandou – Makhado), R523 corridor (Thohoyandou – Musina) and P277/1 corridor linking eastern rural settlements.

These corridors should accommodate mixed-use development, higher-density residential development, commercial activities and transport facilities. Major activity nodes such as Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Tshilamba will function as primary transport hubs within this network.

4.4.4 Municipal Open Space System (MOSS)

The establishment of a Municipal Open Space System (MOSS) is proposed to protect environmentally sensitive areas while structuring development patterns within the municipality.

The MOSS will include:

- Rivers and floodplains
- Wetlands and ecological corridors
- Mountain ridges and biodiversity areas
- Conservation areas including Makuya Nature Reserve





These areas will be protected from urban development and incorporated into an integrated environmental network that supports biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and eco-tourism opportunities.

4.4.5 Urban-Rural Integration Strategy

A key objective of the Spatial Development Framework is to promote stronger integration between urban and rural areas within the TLM. The municipality is characterised by a large number of rural settlements surrounding the main urban centres, and improving the linkages between these areas is essential for promoting inclusive economic development and improving access to opportunities.

Urban–rural integration will be promoted through a combination of spatial, infrastructure, and economic linkages. Spatial integration will be achieved by strengthening the settlement hierarchy, whereby rural settlements are functionally linked to nearby service centres and urban nodes where higher-order services and employment opportunities are located.

Infrastructure integration will be supported through the improvement of transport networks and mobility corridors that connect rural communities with urban economic centres such as Thohoyandou and Sibasa. Improved accessibility will enable residents of rural settlements to access employment opportunities, markets, and social services more easily.

Economic integration will further be promoted by strengthening agricultural production in rural areas and supporting value chain linkages with urban markets. Opportunities also exist to promote agro-processing, tourism

development, and small-scale enterprise development that connects rural economic activities with urban demand.

Through these measures, the SDF aims to promote a more balanced spatial economy where rural communities benefit from their proximity to urban centres while maintaining their important role in agricultural production and cultural heritage.







4.5 DESIRED SPATIAL PATTERN

The desired spatial pattern for Thulamela Local Municipality is structured around a nodal and corridor-based development framework that seeks to consolidate urban growth, strengthen rural service centres, protect environmental and agricultural resources, and improve connectivity between settlements.

The spatial pattern promotes compact urban development within identified Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) while strengthening linkages between urban centres and surrounding rural settlements through an integrated network of mobility corridors. This approach aims to direct investment and infrastructure provision towards priority development areas while limiting uncontrolled settlement expansion into environmentally sensitive areas and high-value agricultural land.

The desired spatial structure of Thulamela is therefore based on five interrelated spatial structuring elements:

1. **Urban and Rural Development Nodes** - *where settlements/villages, services, and urban functions are concentrated.*
2. **Corridor Development System** - *development areas along major transport or economic corridors/activity corridors that facilitate movement and connectivity.*
3. **Tourism Development Areas** - *areas identified for tourism development to leverage natural, cultural, or heritage assets*

4. **Agricultural Production Zones** - *prime agricultural land primarily reserved for farming, agribusiness and other related agricultural activities*

5. **Environmental Conservation Areas** - *ECAs and ESA protected for biodiversity, water resources, and environmental sustainability*

Together, these spatial components guide the long-term spatial transformation of the municipality by concentrating development in appropriate locations, optimising capital infrastructure investment while protecting critical natural and agricultural resources.

4.5.1 Urban and Rural Development Nodes

Urban and rural development nodes form the primary structuring elements of the municipal spatial system. These nodes function as centres of economic activity, service delivery, and infrastructure investment, providing surrounding settlements with access to employment opportunities, government services, social facilities, and markets.

The Thulamela settlement hierarchy is structured around three categories of nodes, each performing a different role within the spatial system, in alignment to the provisions of the LSDF,2025, which entails the following classification relevant to the TLM, Provincial Urban Node, Regional Development Node, and Local Service Centre.





Provincial Urban Node

Provincial Urban Nodes are the highest-order nodes, featuring diverse economies, higher order social and government services, and significant resource potential, making them core to the provincial and national economy. Public investment in infrastructure and social services is needed to support private sector led growth. In TLM, Thohoyandou – Sibasa is a Provincial Urban Node.

The node will continue to function as the primary driver of economic growth and service delivery within the municipality.

Regional Development Anchors

Regional Development Anchors are well located along major transport networks or activity corridors, with strong resource bases and relatively dense populations. They serve as high-order service centres, though some require significant infrastructure investment to unlock their economic potential.

In TLM, Tshilamba and Makonde/Khubvi/Mukula SDAs are then identified as Regional Development Anchors.

These nodes should be strengthened through:

- Consolidation of mixed-use economic activities
- Densification of residential areas within serviced zones
- Upgrading of infrastructure and public facilities
- Development of local commercial centres and business opportunities.

Local Service Centres

Local Service Centres are rural villages and isolated clusters with limited economic and institutional capacity with good accessibility via activity corridors and mobility spines, and they should be prioritized for economic/engineering infrastructure, higher order community facilities, the identified Local Service Centres are:

- Tshifudi, Gaba, Tshaulu.
- Vondwe, Tshitereke, Vhufuli
- Tshixwadza
- Lwamondo, Tshisaulu
- Tshikombani
- Makuya

These nodes should be prioritised for:

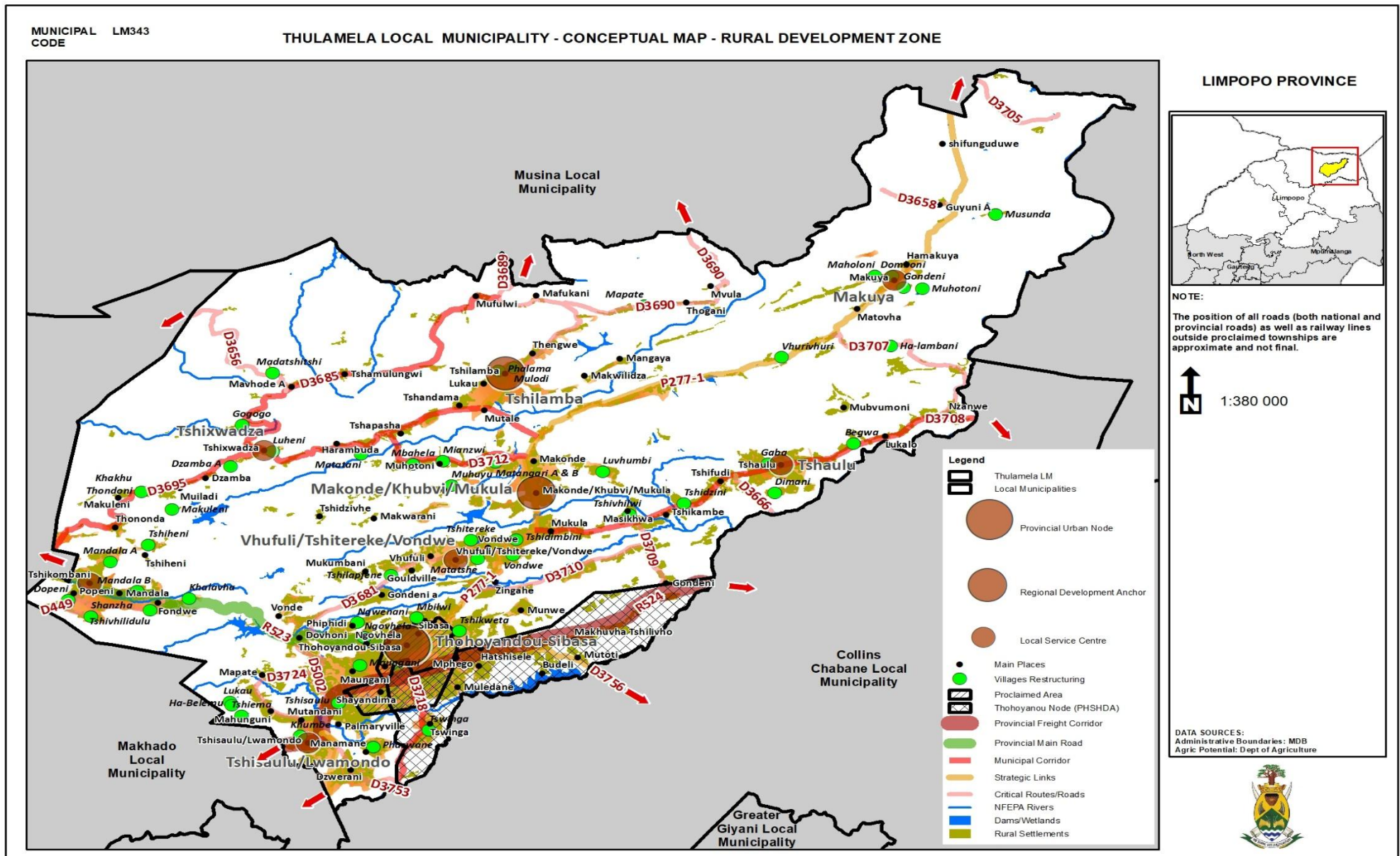
- Provision of social facilities such as clinics, schools, and community halls
- Local retail and service-related economic activities
- Infrastructure upgrades to support surrounding rural settlements
- Improved connectivity with higher-order nodes.







Map 36: Rural Development Zone





4.5.2 Corridors

According to the LSDF 2025, Corridors are functional transport links that carry people or goods between nodes or other regions. The following are the different types of corridors. Mobility and activity corridors form the spatial linkages that connect the nodal system, facilitating the movement of people, goods, and services between settlements. The desired spatial pattern promotes the development of integrated transport and activity corridors that support economic development while improving accessibility between urban and rural areas.

4.5.2.1 Key Transportation Corridors

The key transport corridors identified for Thulamela are:

- R523 corridor connecting Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Tshikombani towards Makhado
- R524 corridor connecting Lwamondo, Thohoyandou and Collins Chabane Municipality
- P277/1 corridor linking Sibasa and Makuya towards Musina Municipality
- D3689 corridor connecting Makonde and Tshilamba towards Musina
- D3708 corridor linking Mukula, Tshifudi and Tshaulu towards Collins Chabane Municipality
- D3666 corridor linking Tshifudi towards Ha-Tshikonelo

These corridors support regional accessibility and economic connectivity to and from other neighbouring municipalities such as Collins Chabane LM and Makhado LM.

4.5.2.2 Activity Corridors and Land Management Mechanisms

Activity corridors represent linear development zones where higher levels of economic activity and residential densities are encouraged, particularly along routes with strong public transport accessibility.

Within Thulamela, activity corridors are typically located along the main roads linking the identified nodes, where economic activities such as local retail, service businesses, informal trading, and community facilities tend to cluster.

However, many of these corridors are currently characterised by unstructured development patterns, including informal trading within road reserves, scattered spaza shops, taxi stopping points, and poorly managed access points. These conditions create challenges related to road safety, traffic congestion, environmental health risks, and limited visibility along mobility routes.

To address these challenges and achieve the desired spatial pattern, the following land management mechanisms should be implemented along activity corridors:

To ensure development control and land use Management, the following could be implemented within the TLM:





- Development of mixed-use and commercial activities should be allowed on the designated mixed-use areas along the corridors.
- Regulate the location of spaza shops, informal trading stalls, and small businesses to ensure they are located within designated trading areas rather than within road reserves.
- Introduce building setback controls to maintain road visibility and pedestrian safety.
- Emphasis must be put on ensuring strict enforcement with the provision of the by-laws and the land use scheme, with constant monitoring and inspections all within the TLM.

For corridor upgrading, TLM could consider to continue developing formalised trading markets and taxi facilities within activity nodes to reduce informal activity along road reserves. Improve pedestrian walkways, lighting, and public spaces along key activity corridors. Introduce landscaping and streetscape improvements to enhance the visual quality of the corridors.

Measures should also be considered for access management, especially on the primary R523, R524 and the P277-1 route, where upgrades are currently necessary. Coupled with the proposed upgrades, considerations should also be made to implement controlled access points to reduce traffic conflicts. Provide designated taxi ranks and bus stops to improve public transport organisation and enforcement. Introducing traffic calming and pedestrian crossing infrastructure within high-activity areas, which currently have been neglected in most areas, such as the non-functional overhead bridges within the CBD and the faded crosswalks.







4.5.3 Agricultural Production Areas

Agricultural land forms a critical component of the desired spatial pattern for Thulamela, contributing to food security, rural livelihoods, and local economic development.

The desired spatial pattern promotes the protection and optimal utilisation of high agricultural potential land, particularly in areas where farming activities already play an important role in local livelihoods.

Development within agricultural zones should therefore focus on:

- Protecting high-potential agricultural land from settlement encroachment.
- Supporting smallholder and emerging farmers through agricultural infrastructure and extension services.
- Promoting agro-processing and value chain development linked to local agricultural production.
- Encouraging sustainable farming practices that protect soil and water resources

Agricultural development should be integrated with rural economic development strategies to strengthen the role of agriculture within the municipal economy.

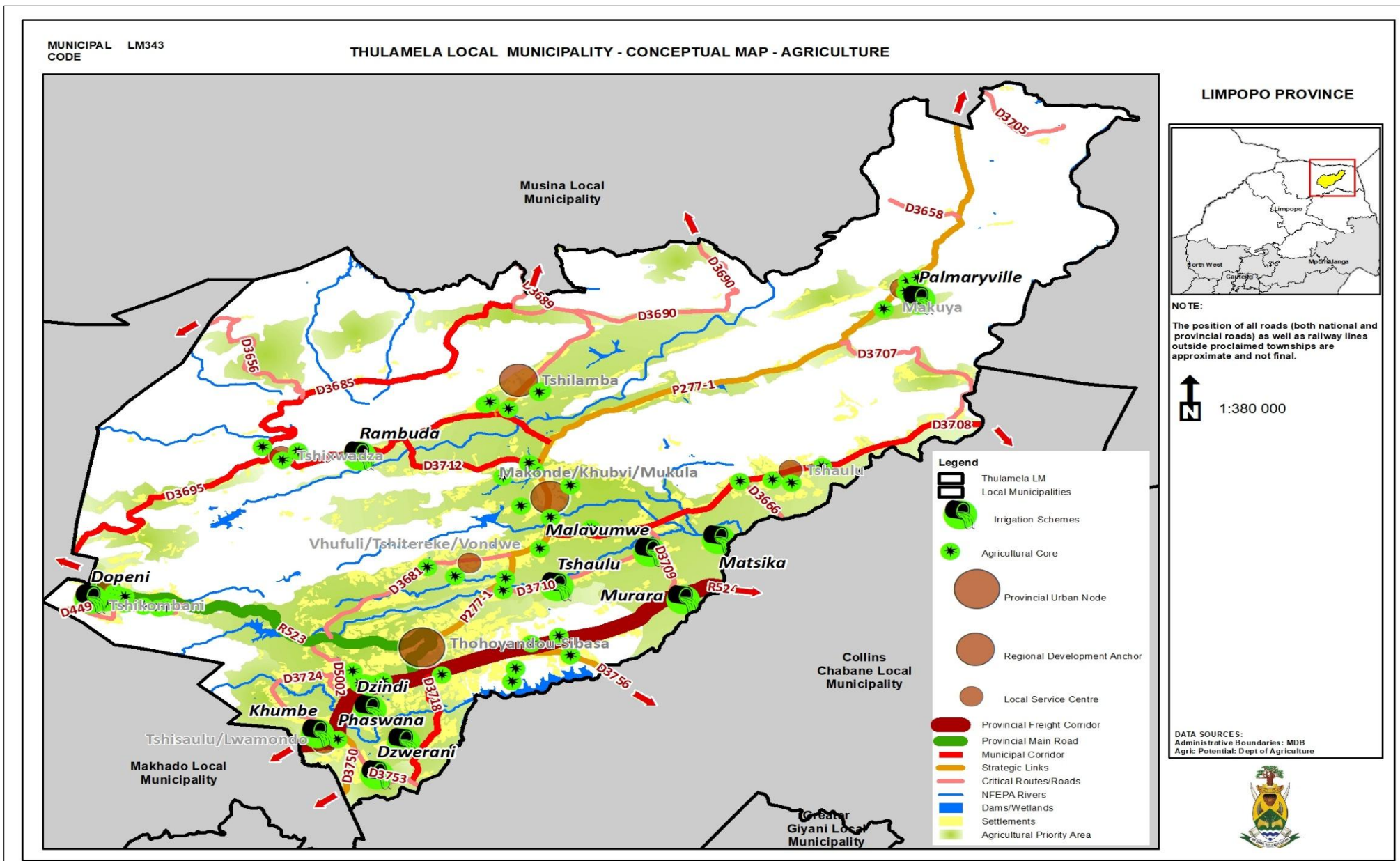
Several key recommendations are proposed as there is critical need to delineate agricultural priority zones within the municipal area. TLM should strengthen support for emerging and smallholder farmers. The municipality

should invest in capacity building for both municipal officials and traditional councils involved in agricultural land management.





Map 38: Agricultural Zone





4.5.4 Environmental Conservation

The establishment of the Municipal Open Space System (MOSS) and river buffer zones represents a proactive effort to integrate ecological considerations into land-use management. Environmental conservation areas form an essential component of the desired spatial pattern, ensuring the protection of biodiversity, water resources, and ecological systems within the municipality.

The desired spatial structure promotes the development of an integrated Municipal Open Space System that connects environmentally sensitive areas such as rivers, wetlands, ridges, mountain ranges, and biodiversity corridors.

These areas should be protected from inappropriate development and managed as part of a broader environmental management framework.

Key spatial interventions include:

- Protection of river corridors and wetland systems through appropriate buffer zones
- Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and ecological support zones.
- Integration of conservation areas with tourism development opportunities.
- Strengthening environmental monitoring and enforcement mechanisms

Environmental conservation areas, therefore function as green structuring elements within the spatial framework, supporting ecological sustainability while enhancing tourism and recreational opportunities.

To strengthen environmental conservation within the TLM, a more integrated, proactive, and coordinated approach is required.

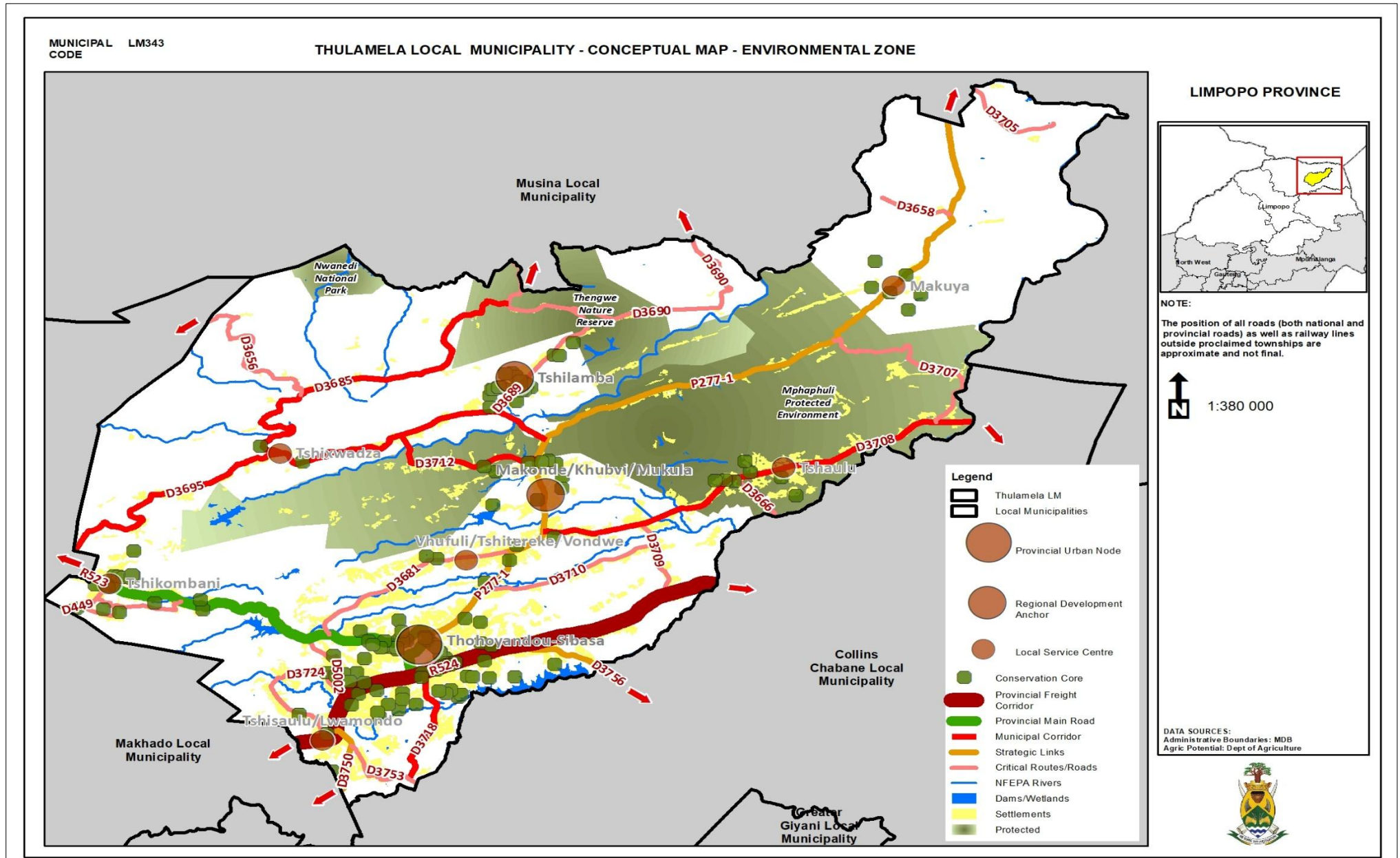
It is recommended that TLM, also develop a Comprehensive Environmental Management Framework (EMF) as it would therefore serve as a guiding tool to identify, map, and ecological support zones and environmentally constrained land. There is a need to strengthen institutional capacity within the municipality.

The community participation should be considered in matters relevant to environmental management, traditional councils and local communities possess invaluable indigenous knowledge of natural resources management and should be included as key partners in conservation initiatives.





Map 39: Environmental Zone





4.5.5 Tourism

TLM, located in the VDM including Pafuri region of the Kruger National Park in Limpopo which is in the Eastern region according to the LSDF, 2025, is a significant archaeological and cultural heritage site representing a late Iron Age settlement that once formed part of the Mapungubwe, Great Zimbabwe cultural complex.

Its tourism character is rooted in heritage and eco-cultural experiences, attracting visitors interested in African history, archaeology, and the natural environment in areas like Tshaulu, Makonde and Dzimauli with caves known for its mystical beliefs and others call them myths. However, these sites remain underdeveloped, with limited accessibility, minimal visitor facilities, and weak integration with surrounding communities and villages.

Moreover, TLM holds strong potential for sustainable tourism development through improved infrastructure, better road connections, and the creation of cultural tourism corridors linking nearby settlements such as Tshaulu and Makonde for example and also integrating community-based initiatives such as local guiding, craft markets, and cultural performances which could enhance economic participation while preserving the site's authenticity. Furthermore, Tshatshingo Potholes in Tshidzivhe and Lake Fundudzi near Makuleni, Tshiavha villages and the Thathe Vondo Sacred Forest.

Spatial planning approaches emphasising conservation zones, eco-friendly facilities, and heritage-sensitive design can help balance development with environmental and cultural protection. Ultimately, TLM careful development

could transform it into a catalyst for regional growth, showcasing how heritage tourism can drive community upliftment and sustainable rural development, as almost all identified SDAs have areas of tourism importance.

Moreover, TLM offers immense potential to become a cornerstone of a regional cultural and eco-tourism network within the Eastern Region, and could be conceptualised as an anchor destination within a broader tourism corridor linking the Kruger National Park, Mapungubwe and local cultural villages. Strategic spatial planning interventions could focus on upgrading access roads, developing eco-friendly visitor infrastructure, and enhancing interpretive facilities that educate visitors about TLM history and its role in Africa's ancient trade systems. The establishment of a small heritage interpretation centre or cultural hub in nearby towns and villages could act as a gateway to the site, promoting local art, crafts, and storytelling.

In a nutshell, TLM tourism character reflects a rare combination of historical depth, cultural richness, and natural beauty. Although currently underdeveloped, TLM has substantial potential to drive sustainable, heritage-based regional development through improved infrastructure, community participation, and conservation-sensitive design, TLM, therefore could evolve into a model of how heritage and eco-tourism can stimulate inclusive growth, environmental stewardship, and cultural revitalization in rural South Africa

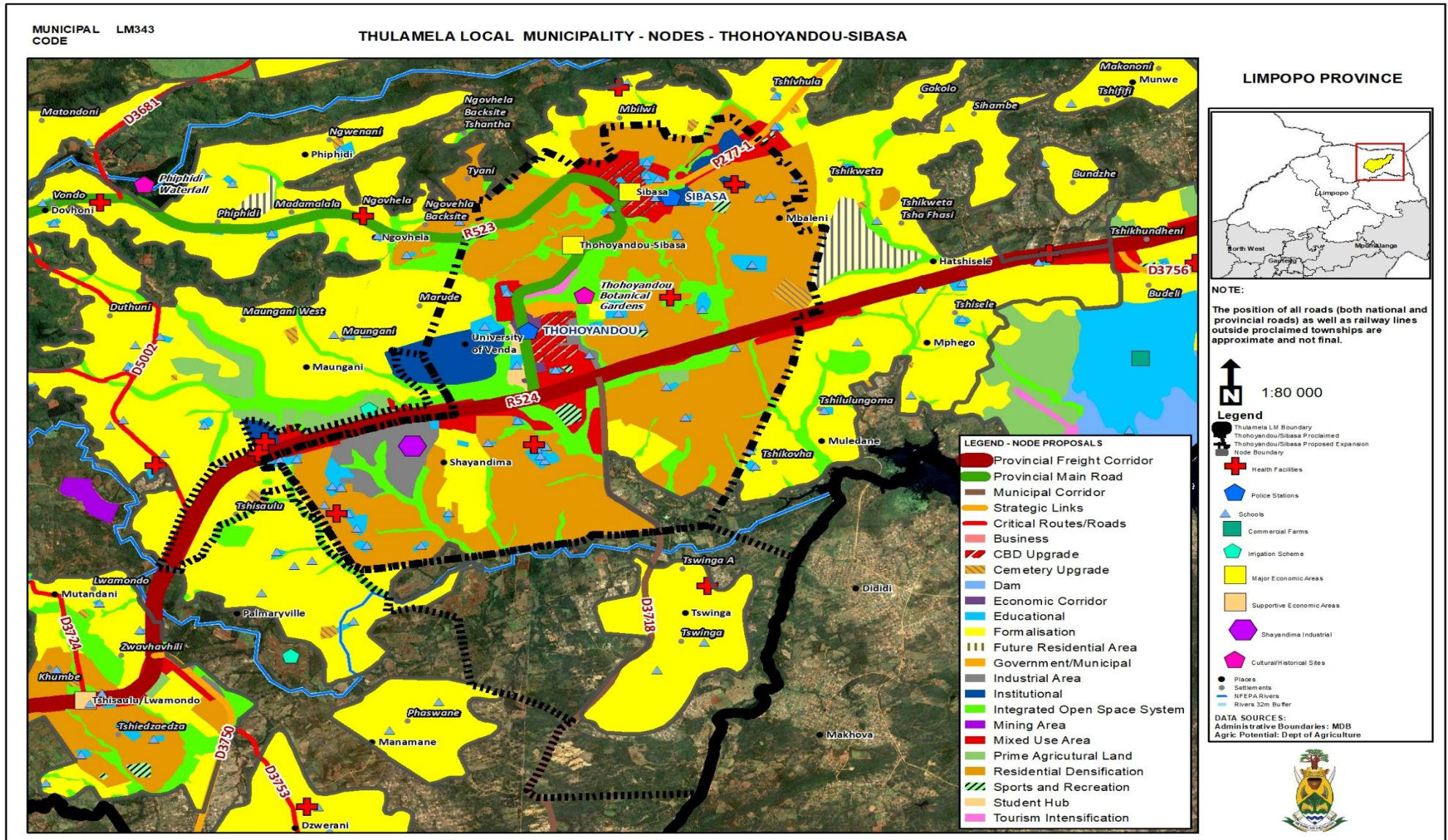






4.6 NODAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Map 41: Thohoyandou – Sibasa Provincial Urban Node





4.6.1 Thohoyandou – Sibasa Node

The Thohoyandou-Sibasa Provincial Urban Node is identified as a key administrative, service, and agricultural gateway within the TLM and VDM. The node functions as a major regional centre that accommodates government institutions, higher-order social services, commercial activities, and tertiary economic functions, serving a densely populated rural-urban surroundings of TLM and VDM. The LSDF, 2025 emphasizes the consolidation of growth and investments within the Thohoyandou-Sibasa node to enhance service delivery, stimulate economic development, and strengthen its role as a strategic agricultural and tourism gateway linked to both commercial and small-scale farming activities within the surrounding areas.

4.6.1.1 Thohoyandou

The Thohoyandou SDA functions as the primary administrative, economic, and institutional centre within the TLM. The node accommodates a concentration of government offices, higher-order retail facilities, educational institutions, health services, and commercial activities that serve both the municipality and the surrounding areas within the district at large.

The node plays a critical role in providing employment opportunities, facilitating service delivery, and supporting economic development within the municipality. Due to the presence of major institutional facilities such as universities, hospitals, and government departments, Thohoyandou attracts significant daily movement from surrounding settlements and rural villages. As such, the node functions as the primary service and economic hub supporting both urban and rural communities within the entire municipality.

In addition to its administrative and commercial role, the node is supported by surrounding economic activity areas, including Sibasa and the Thohoyandou Industrial Area (Shayandima), which collectively contribute to the broader urban economy and strengthen the functional urban system of the node and the municipality.

4.6.1.1.1 Development Focus

Development within the Thohoyandou should focus on strengthening its role as the primary economic and administrative centre of the municipality while improving spatial efficiency, infrastructure capacity, and economic opportunities.

Key development priorities within the node include the consolidation of commercial and retail activities within the central business district, the promotion of mixed-use development, and the strengthening of institutional and educational facilities. Residential densification within appropriate areas of the node should be encouraged as stipulated in the Thulamela Densification Policy in order to support compact urban development and improve proximity between residential areas and employment opportunities.

Industrial development within the municipality should be directed and supported towards the Thohoyandou Industrial Area, which functions as the main industrial hub supporting economic activities within the Thohoyandou urban system. Improved linkages between Thohoyandou, Sibasa, and the Thohoyandou Industrial Area will further enhance economic integration and support employment creation.





Strategic infill development and densification within the urban core should be encouraged to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services.

Infrastructure upgrades should also form an important component of the development focus for the node. Particular attention should be given to improving sanitation infrastructure, upgrading stormwater systems, and strengthening bulk service capacity to accommodate future growth and urban intensification. Especially with the current trends of densification within the node, putting a strain on infrastructure.

Tohoyandou Industrial Area (Shayandima) forms an important component of the Tohoyandou due to its strategic role as the primary industrial and economic activity area within the municipality. It potentially accommodates a concentration of industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and service-related activities that support the broader local economy. The Tohoyandou Industrial Area should be integrated to the Tohoyandou node as an area where future industrial expansion, light manufacturing, logistics activities, and related economic uses can be encouraged. Strengthening infrastructure provision and supporting industrial diversification within the Tohoyandou Industrial Area will further enhance the economic performance of the Tohoyandou node and reinforce its role as the primary economic centre within the municipality.

4.6.1.1.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term growth of Tohoyandou should be guided by principles of spatial efficiency, integration, and sustainable urban development. Future growth should prioritise the consolidation of development within the existing

urban footprint while promoting more compact and integrated settlement patterns.

The long-term spatial vision for Tohoyandou is to strengthen its role as the primary administrative, commercial, and service centre within TLM, complemented by relevant industrial and economic activities in the area such as Shayandima. The node is expected to continue functioning as the focal point for government services, higher-order retail, education, and economic activity, while accommodating increased mixed-use development and improved urban integration with surrounding settlements.

In the short term (0–5 years), development within the node should focus on consolidating existing urban functions, improving infrastructure capacity, and supporting local economic development initiatives. The medium term (5–10 years) should prioritise the strengthening of economic linkages between Tohoyandou and surrounding activity areas, including the industrial activities in Shayandima, as well as the improvement of mobility and accessibility within the broader area, including the upgrading and extension of the R524 route. In the long term (10–20 years), the node is expected to evolve into a more compact and integrated urban centre characterised by diversified economic activities, improved public infrastructure, and enhanced connectivity with regional transport corridors, supporting the overall vision of Thulamela becoming a city.

Ngovhela, Tswinga, and Maungani are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring





4.6.1.1.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

To strengthen the role and functionality of the Thohoyandou, the following strategic projects are proposed:

One of the key projects involves the revitalisation and upgrading of the Thohoyandou Central Business District in order to improve the quality of public spaces, enhance pedestrian accessibility, and support commercial investment.

The development of improved public transport facilities and mobility infrastructure within the node. This includes the upgrading of taxi ranks, implementation of the intermodal facility and upgrade of major supporting roads connecting to the surrounding settlements.

Promoting industrialisation within the Thohoyandou Industrial Area to further promote industrial growth, supporting small and medium enterprises, and creating employment opportunities for residents.

Importantly, the upgrading of sanitation and bulk infrastructure systems, the development of integrated human settlements within the Thohoyandou PHSODA.

Development of a formal truck stop within the Thohoyandou area to manage heavy vehicle traffic stopping along the major roads within Thohoyandou CBD, further contributing to traffic congestion.

4.6.1.1.4 Proposed Development Objectives for Thohoyandou

- Prioritise infill development and densification within the strategic points and strategic routes.

- Identify strategic areas to promote greenfield development in proximity to services to accommodate population or economic growth.
- Invest in the upgrading and maintenance of ageing bulk infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity, stormwater), particularly in high-growth and underserved areas.
- Exploit Thohoyandou's strategic location along the R524, R523 and P277/1 to attract logistics, industrial and commercial investments.
- Promote agro-processing industries in surrounding rural areas to diversify the economy and create local and regional value chains.
- Formalise informal trade by providing demarcated trading zones, infrastructure and support services in key urban areas or business areas in rural areas.
- Safeguard and sustainably utilise fertile agricultural areas
- Develop mixed-income housing within the Thohoyandou urban development edge, close to jobs and services, to support inclusion and limit the growth of informal settlements.







4.6.1.2 Sibasa

The Sibasa Node forms part of the primary urban complex of the TLM together with Thohoyandou and functions as one of the most significant administrative, commercial and service centres within the municipality, supporting Thohoyandou as the primary node. It plays an important role in providing access to higher-order services, government institutions, commercial activities and social facilities for surrounding settlements.

Sibasa is strategically located along the R523 (P278/1) and P277/1 mobility corridors, which provide strong regional connectivity between the western and eastern parts of the municipality as well as linkages to surrounding rural settlements. This accessibility has contributed to the development of Sibasa as an important urban node that accommodates a range of commercial, institutional and residential activities.

The node also accommodates several government offices, retail centres, community facilities and business activities that serve not only residents within Sibasa but also communities from surrounding villages. As a result, Sibasa functions as an important service centre and plays a critical role in strengthening the broader Thohoyandou urban system.

4.6.1.2.1 Development Focus

Development within the Sibasa should focus on strengthening its role as a key service centre while promoting densification, mixed-use economic activity and improved infrastructure provision to service the growing demand.

Residential development should prioritise the formalisation and upgrading of informal residential settlements, particularly within the northern parts of the

node, within and along the Urban edge, in order to improve living conditions and ensure access to essential infrastructure. Infill development and higher residential densities should be encouraged within the area earmarked for Residential Densification, which is well located in relation to economic opportunities, improved infrastructure, and public transport routes in order to support a more compact Sibasa node.

Mixed-use development should be strengthened within and around the Sibasa CBD, as well as along the major movement corridors, including the R523 (P278/1) and P277/1 routes, highlighted as Mixed-Use areas. These corridors present continued opportunities for retail, commercial, office and service-related activities that can benefit from high levels of accessibility and movement.

The upgrade and revitalisation of the Sibasa CBD should also focus on improving the quality of public spaces, regulating and strengthening informal trading opportunities and enhancing the overall urban environment of Sibasa CBD.

Tourism and accommodation activities can also play a supporting role in the local economy of Sibasa. The development of guesthouses, lodges and small-scale accommodation facilities within appropriate mixed-use areas and areas highlighted for residential densification can support visitors and business travellers while contributing to local economic diversification within the area.

Environmental protection should remain an important consideration within the node. Environmentally sensitive areas, particularly steep slopes and areas





associated with river systems, should remain protected and form part of the municipal open space system in order to preserve ecological functions and support sustainable urban development.

Mbilwi, Lufule, Tshikweta are areas earmarked for Rural Restructuring

4.6.1.2.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Sibasa Node is to strengthen its role as an integrated urban centre that supports economic activity, service provision and residential development within the broader Thohoyandou urban system.

Future growth within the node should focus on strengthening densification within the existing built-up area, while supporting the formalisation and upgrading of informal residential settlements to improve settlement structure and infrastructure provision and to ensure that development is directed towards areas that are well served by infrastructure and accessible to the main movement corridors within the node.

In the short term (0–5 years), development priorities should focus on settlement formalisation, upgrading of engineering infrastructure and improvements to the Sibasa CBD in order to strengthen its role as a local economic centre, especially faced with the increased pressure, demands and challenges of continued spillages.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development should focus on strengthening mixed-use development along the R523 (P278/1) and P277/1 corridors while improving connectivity between Sibasa and surrounding settlements.

In the long term (10–20 years), Sibasa should evolve into a well-structured node that supports the broader Thohoyandou urban complex through strengthened economic activity, improved infrastructure systems and a more integrated urban form.

4.6.1.2.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

Settlement formalisation and upgrading programmes should be prioritised in informal residential settlements in order to improve land tenure security and facilitate the provision of municipal infrastructure.

CBD upgrade and revitalisation initiatives within the Sibasa CBD should be implemented to strengthen retail and commercial activities, improve public spaces and provide formalised trading opportunities for informal traders.

The development of mixed-use activities along the R523 (P278/1) and P277/1 routes should be promoted in order to consolidate commercial activities and support small and medium-sized businesses.

Infrastructure upgrades related to water supply, sanitation systems and internal road networks will be essential to support future residential and economic growth within the node and strengthen mobility and improve accessibility between Sibasa and surrounding rural settlements.

Environmental protection initiatives should also be implemented to conserve sensitive ecological areas and integrate open spaces into the broader municipal open space system.





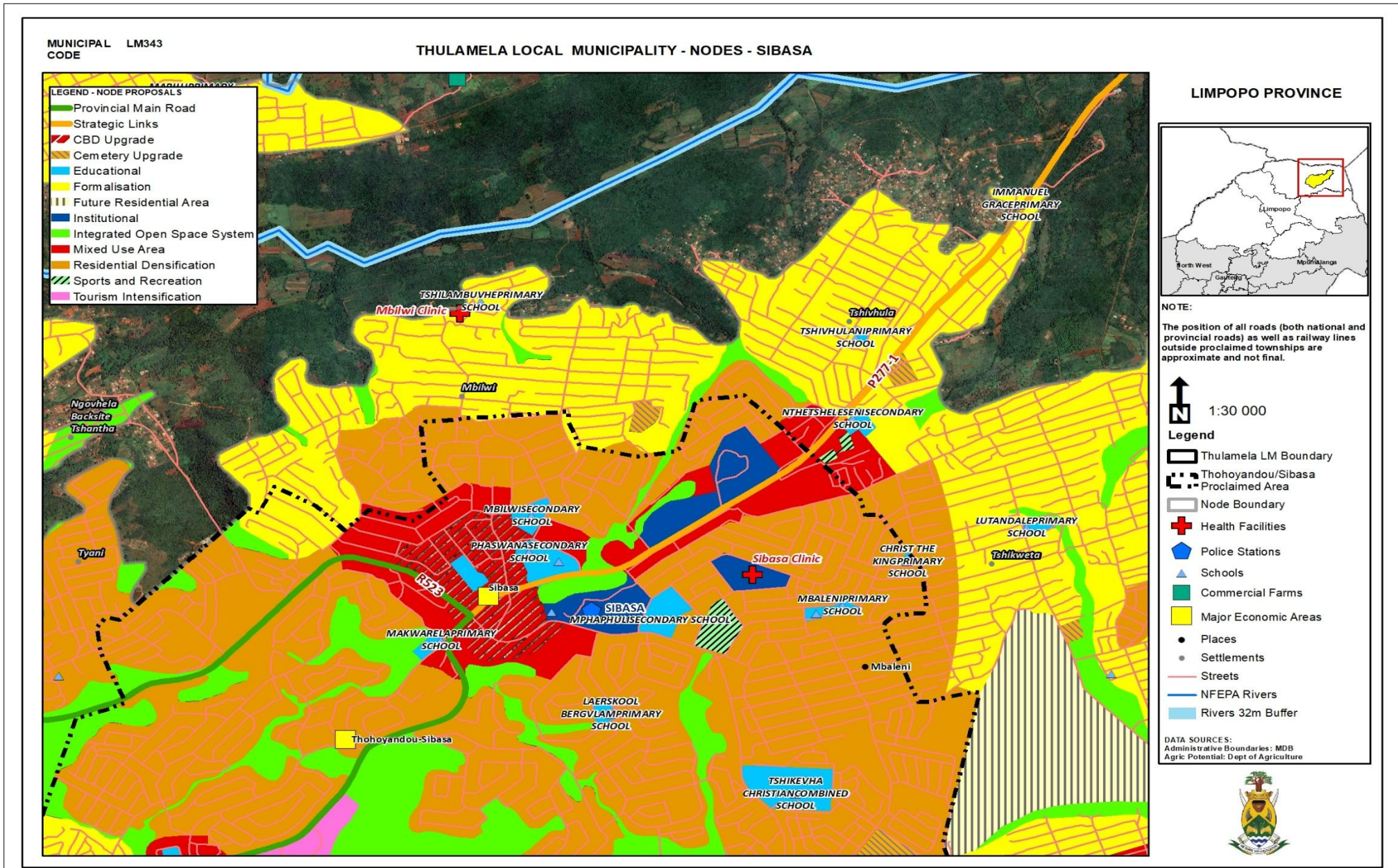
4.6.1.2.4 Proposed Development Objectives for Sibasa

- Prioritise Infill Development and Densification within the strategic points and strategic routes.
- Identify strategic areas to promote Greenfield development in proximity to services to accommodate population or economic growth.
- Identify and upgrade informal settlements within the node.
- Invest in the upgrading and maintenance of ageing bulk infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity, stormwater), particularly in high-growth and underserved areas.
- Exploit Sibasa's strategic location along the R523 and P277/1 to attract logistics, industrial and commercial investments.
- Promote agro-processing industries in surrounding rural areas to diversify the economy and create local and regional value chains.
- Formalise informal trade by providing demarcated trading zones, infrastructure and support services in key urban areas or business areas in rural areas within the node.
- Safeguard and sustainably utilise fertile agricultural areas
- Develop mixed-income housing within the sibasa urban development edge, close to jobs and services, to support inclusion and limit the growth of informal settlements.





Map 43: Sibasa





4.6.2 Tshilamba Regional Development Anchor Node

The Tshilamba Regional Development Anchor Node functions as an important node within the settlement hierarchy of TLM. The node provides a range of community services and public facilities that support surrounding rural settlements and villages within the municipal area.

The node accommodates a number of key public and social facilities, including educational institutions, health services, and local government-related services, which contribute to its role as a local administrative and community support centre. These facilities serve a broad rural catchment area and play an important role in improving access to essential services for surrounding communities.

Although Tshilamba contains some commercial and retail activities, the scale of economic activity remains relatively less compared to larger urban centres such as Thohoyandou. As a result, the node primarily functions as a decentralised service point that supports the daily needs of nearby rural settlements.

Within the broader spatial structure of the municipality, Tshilamba contributes to improving spatial equity by providing localised access to services and facilities, thereby reducing the need for rural communities to travel long distances to access basic services.

4.6.2.1 Development Focus

Future development within the Tshilamba Regional Development Anchor Node should focus on strengthening its role as a community support node that provides accessible services to surrounding villages.

Development priorities should include the consolidation and upgrading of existing public service facilities such as educational institutions, healthcare services, and community facilities. These facilities form the backbone of the node and should be supported through improved infrastructure and accessibility.

There is also an opportunity to strengthen local small-scale economic activity, particularly through the development of small retail outlets, informal trading areas, and service-related businesses that cater to the surrounding rural population.

Residential development within Tshilamba should focus primarily on infill development and densification within the proposed urban edge, rather than large-scale expansion. This will assist in supporting more efficient service provision within confined areas rather than ribbon development.

Infrastructure improvements will remain a key priority for the node. Upgrading water supply, sanitation infrastructure, and internal access roads will be necessary to support existing settlements and improve living conditions for residents.





4.6.2.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision.

The long-term spatial vision for the Tshilamba Regional Development Anchor Node is to strengthen its role as a well-functioning node that provides accessible community services and supports the local livelihoods of surrounding communities.

Future growth within the node should focus on the consolidation of existing settlement areas and the strengthening of service infrastructure rather than extensive outward expansion. Development should aim to create a more structured and accessible service node that effectively serves surrounding rural communities.

In the short term (0–5 years), priority should be given to upgrading municipal infrastructure, improving access to public service facilities, and strengthening small-scale commercial activities that support local residents.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development should focus on improving connectivity between Tshilamba and surrounding villages through improved road infrastructure and public transport accessibility. This will enhance the ability of surrounding communities to access services located within the node.

In the long term (10–20 years), Tshilamba should evolve into a stable rural service centre that provides reliable access to social services, supports small-scale economic activity, and contributes to improved spatial integration across the municipality.

Phalama, Mulodi, Lukau, Thengwe are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring

4.6.2.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

Several strategic projects and interventions are required to strengthen the role and functionality of the Tshilamba Regional Development Anchor Node.

One of the key priorities is the upgrading and expansion of existing public service facilities, particularly within the education and healthcare sectors, in order to accommodate the needs of the surrounding rural population.

Improvements to municipal infrastructure systems, including water supply, and sanitation services, will be essential in addressing existing service delivery challenges and promoting investments within the node.

The upgrading of local access roads and internal mobility networks will also improve connectivity between Tshilamba and surrounding villages, thereby enhancing access to services and economic opportunities.

Through these interventions, Tshilamba can strengthen its role as an important rural service node and contribute to improving access to services and economic opportunities within the wider municipal area

4.6.2.4 Proposed Development Objectives

Mixed Use

Mixed-use development should leverage the strategic location of the node along the D3695 Sasol garage intersection towards Mutale Retail Centre and from D3689 towards Mutale SAPS to support economic activity and service provision.





Key focus area include:

- Mixed use developments are encouraged along the highlighted Mixed-Use area along the along the D3695 Sasol garage intersection towards Mutale Retail Centre and from D3689 towards Mutale SAPS, where a mixture of compatible land uses is supported and should be intensified, excluding uses of heavy industrial nature and activities involving noxious substances
- Clustering of commercial, social, and residential activities along key activity spines particularly between the D3689 Engen intersection garage and D3695 Sasol garage intersection to create vibrant and accessible activity zones that serve both local residents and surrounding rural communities such as Phalama, Mulodi, Lukau, and Thengwe.
- Formalisation and support of informal trade through the provision of designated trading infrastructure, demarcated trading spaces, and adequate services, particularly along high-movement routes such as the D3689 in front of the Tshilamba Retail Centre, where pedestrian and public transport flows provide a steady customer base.
- Development of corridor-based economic opportunity zones targeting local demand and passing traffic within the Mixed-Use Area, with a focus on consolidating existing anchors such as filling stations, hardware stores, retail facilities, lodges, and professional services into an integrated and functional service node.

- Ensure that mixed-use development is guided by appropriate design standards that maintain pedestrian-friendly environments, safe vehicular access, structured layout planning, and aesthetic consistency along the D3689 and D3695 corridors, while protecting road reserves and the Integrated IOSS from encroachment.
- Strengthen nodal activity points at key intersections and access points, such as the Engen Garage intersection along the D3689, by consolidating mixed-use development, improving loading and off-loading facilities, upgrading basic infrastructure, and incorporating well-designed public spaces to enhance accessibility, safety, and economic functionality.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure investment within the Tshilamba node should reinforce its role as a rural service centre, support sustainable growth, and enable efficient service delivery for both the local population and the broader rural catchment area.

Key focus areas include:

- Upgrading and maintenance of key transport linkages particularly the D3689 and D3695 routes to enhance mobility, connectivity, and accessibility between Tshilamba and surrounding rural communities including Phalama, Mulodi, Lukau, and Thengwe.
- Improvement and maintenance of internal road networks within the node boundary and surrounding settlements to facilitate easier access





to social services, economic opportunities, and public transport facilities.

- Upgrading and expansion of bulk infrastructure systems including water supply, sanitation, electricity, and stormwater management to address ageing and under-capacitated networks, improve living conditions, and support future residential and economic growth within the node.
- Alignment of infrastructure provision with infill development, densification, and settlement formalisation initiatives within the urban development edge to ensure cost-effective and efficient service delivery, while limiting unnecessary infrastructure expansion into outlying areas.
- Enhancement of public transport facilities and accessibility within the node, including improved taxi and bus infrastructure, to strengthen connectivity between Tshilamba and its rural hinterland and facilitate access to services and economic opportunities.
- Provision of dedicated infrastructure to support mixed-use and economic activity zones within the node, including the formalisation of informal trading areas through demarcated trading zones, basic services, and supporting infrastructure to enhance local economic activity and livelihoods.
- Integration of environmentally sensitive design measures into all infrastructure upgrades and new developments to protect water

catchment areas, rivers, wetlands, and biodiversity corridors, ensuring long-term environmental sustainability and resource security within the Tshilamba node.

Residential

Residential development within the Tshilamba node should promote consolidation, densification, and improved living conditions within a structured settlement framework that respects the node's rural character while supporting orderly and sustainable growth.

- Prioritisation of infill development and densification within the defined urban development edge to promote compact and efficient land use, limit uncontrolled outward expansion, and prevent ribbon development along road corridors.
- Promotion of residential growth within already established areas to optimise existing infrastructure capacity, reduce the cost-of-service delivery, and reinforce the sustainability of Tshilamba as a rural service centre.
- Active engagement and capacitation of Traditional Authorities, together with royal councils, on land use management principles and demarcation processes to ensure a shared understanding of land designated for residential use versus land reserved for public infrastructure, environmental protection, and open space systems.





Integrated Open Space System (IOSS)

Environmental systems should be protected and integrated into spatial structure of the node.

Key focus areas include:

- Ensure the conservation and protection of all environmentally sensitive areas including drainage lines, wetlands, and natural open spaces designated as the IOSS on the Tshilamba node map, preventing further encroachment for residential or business purposes, particularly along the D3689 corridor.
- Ensure the protection of rivers, drainage lines, wetlands, and floodplains within and surrounding Tshilamba to form part of the IOSS, maintaining their hydrological function and preventing increased flood risk, soil erosion, and ecosystem degradation resulting from unregulated development.
- Encourage the establishment of ecological buffer zones along the boundaries of sensitive environmental areas to prevent development encroachment, manage land use transitions, and safeguard the integrity of the IOSS from population growth and housing demand pressures.
- Prioritise the rehabilitation of degraded and encroached open spaces through targeted interventions including restoration of natural drainage systems, re-vegetation programmes, and erosion control

measures, and integrate these rehabilitated areas into a broader open space network within the node.

- Promote the use of open space systems for passive recreation and community benefit including the development of parks and community green spaces within rehabilitated IOSS areas to enhance the quality of life for Tshilamba residents and surrounding communities.
- Enforce environmental compliance for all development applications affecting sensitive areas within the node, supported by the active engagement and capacitation of Traditional Authorities on the importance of open space protection and their role in ensuring that land allocations respect designated IOSS boundaries and municipal planning frameworks.

Mining

Sand mining activities within the Tshilamba node must be strictly regulated and responsibly managed to protect critical water infrastructure, preserve environmental integrity, and ensure sustainable land use within the node.

Key focus area include:

- Strictly regulate and control sand mining activities within the Tshilamba node in accordance with applicable environmental legislation and municipal land use management controls, ensuring that all mining operations are properly authorised and aligned with the municipality's SDF and Land Use Management Scheme (LUMS).





- Enforce the requirement for appropriate environmental authorisation including EIAs prior to the commencement of any sand mining activities, particularly in areas in close proximity to sensitive environmental systems and critical infrastructure such as the Mutale Water Purification Works.
- Establish clearly demarcated buffer zones around the Mutale Water Purification Works and associated river systems to prevent sand mining activities from compromising water quality, destabilising riverbanks, increasing sedimentation, and undermining the efficiency and safety of water supply to surrounding communities.
- Implement continuous environmental monitoring and compliance inspection programmes for all sand mining operations within the node to detect and address negative impacts on water resources, natural drainage patterns, vegetation, and surrounding land uses timeously and effectively.
- Strengthen enforcement measures against illegal and unregulated sand mining activities, including the application of appropriate legal and regulatory mechanisms to halt unauthorised extraction and prevent further land degradation, habitat destruction, and infrastructure damage within the node.
- Prioritise the rehabilitation of degraded and mined areas through targeted land restoration interventions, including re-vegetation programmes, riverbank stabilisation, and the restoration of natural

drainage patterns to restore ecological functionality and mitigate flood risk in affected areas.

- Manage the movement of heavy vehicles associated with sand mining activities through appropriate traffic management measures to minimise road damage, dust pollution, and safety risks to local communities within and surrounding the Tshilamba node.

Agriculture

Agricultural land and activities within the Tshilamba node should be protected, supported, and sustainably managed to preserve local food security, promote agricultural-based livelihoods, and prevent the loss of productive land to uncontrolled residential expansion.

Key focus areas include:

- Identify, demarcate, and protect valuable agricultural land particularly along the river on the southern side of Thengwe High School, Phalama East, Tshishivhe Ext and Tshandama East through the municipality's SDF and LUMS, preventing further fragmentation and conversion of productive agricultural land to residential use.
- Enforce controlled residential development to ensure that housing expansion does not encroach into critical agricultural land or environmentally sensitive areas, directing residential growth toward appropriate infill areas within the urban development edge rather than onto productive riverbank agricultural land.



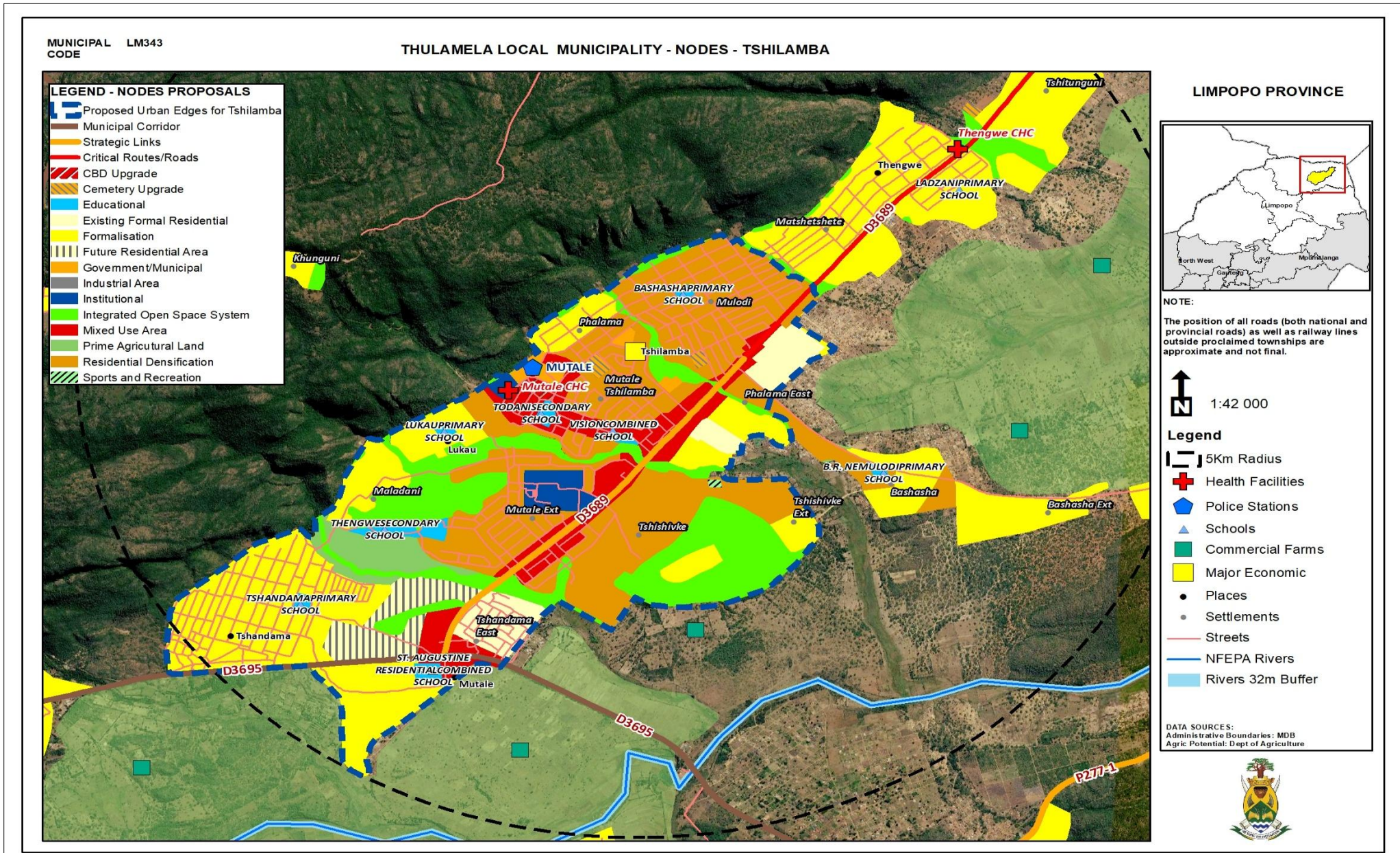


- Establish and enforce clearly demarcated buffer zones along riparian areas and riverbanks to protect water resources, prevent soil erosion and water pollution associated with both agricultural and residential activities, and safeguard the integrity of the river system and associated natural vegetation.
- Strengthen support for small-scale and subsistence agricultural activities within the node through improved access to agricultural resources, training, extension services, and basic infrastructure, enabling households to enhance productivity, food security, and income generation from existing agricultural land.
- Promote agro-processing opportunities and the development of local agricultural value chains to enhance the economic viability of small-scale farming activities within and surrounding the Tshilamba node, contributing to local livelihoods, job creation, and economic diversification.
- Integrate the protection of agricultural land into broader environmental management frameworks within the node, ensuring that land use decisions along sensitive riverbank areas balance the need for residential growth with the preservation of productive agricultural land, riparian ecosystems, and natural resources for long-term sustainability.





Map 44: Tshilamba





4.6.3 Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi Regional Development Anchor

The Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi Regional Development Anchor functions as a clustered rural service node within the TLM. The node is structured around three closely related settlements, namely Makonde, Mukula and Khubvi, which collectively provide essential services and economic opportunities to surrounding villages.

The node is strategically located along the P277-1 route, an important mobility corridor that links the central urban areas of the municipality with northern rural settlements and regional centres. This corridor supports the movement of people, goods and services between settlements and forms part of the broader spatial structure of the municipality.

The node accommodates a range of community facilities, local commercial activities and social services that support surrounding rural settlements. However, development within the node remains fragmented, with several planned infrastructure and service improvements still pending implementation.

As a Regional Development Anchor, Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi plays an important role in supporting rural livelihoods, improving access to services, and strengthening economic linkages between rural settlements and larger urban centres such as Thohoyandou.

4.6.3.1 Development Focus

Development within the Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi Regional Development Anchor should focus on strengthening the node as a rural service and corridor development node that supports surrounding settlements and agricultural activities.

Priority should be given to consolidating existing community facilities and improving service delivery infrastructure within the three settlements that form the cluster. Development should focus on strengthening local commercial activities, improving public service access, and supporting small-scale economic enterprises that serve surrounding villages.

Given the agricultural potential of parts of the surrounding area, particularly near the Mutale River and horticultural production zones, the node also presents opportunities to support agriculture-related economic activities, including small-scale agro-processing, agricultural markets and support services for local farmers.

Development along the P277-1 route should be managed carefully to strengthen the role of the corridor as a mobility and service spine while preventing uncontrolled ribbon development. Localised commercial and service activities should be concentrated within the existing nodal areas of Makonde, Mukula and Khubvi.





Infrastructure upgrades will be essential to support the development of the node. Priority interventions include the provision of water supply, sanitation systems, and the upgrade of local road infrastructure to support existing settlements and future development.

4.6.3.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi Regional Development Anchor is to develop a well-connected rural service cluster that supports surrounding villages, agricultural activities and corridor-based economic development within the TLM.

Future growth should focus on strengthening the three settlement components of the node while improving connectivity between them along the P277-1 corridor. Development should prioritise the consolidation of services and commercial activities within the existing settlements rather than encouraging dispersed expansion.

In the short term (0–5 years), development efforts should prioritise the implementation of key service infrastructure and community facilities to accelerate development. This includes improving basic services, strengthening local economic activity and improving road connectivity within the node.

In the medium term (5–10 years), the focus should shift towards supporting agriculture-related economic opportunities, strengthening corridor-based

commercial activity, and improving linkages with other regional nodes within the municipality.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should function as a stable rural service centre that supports surrounding settlements, enhances rural economic activity and improves access to services for communities within the northern and central parts of the municipality.

Mianzwi, Tshivhilwi, Tshidimbini, Mbahela, Muhuyu, Matangari, Luvhumbi are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring

4.6.3.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

Key projects and strategic interventions are required to strengthen the functionality and service capacity of the Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi Regional Development Anchor.

One of the key priority projects is the development of the Thusong Centre in Makonde, which has been proposed to provide integrated social, educational and government services to surrounding communities.

The implementation of the Integrated Open Space System (IOSS) should also be prioritised in order to create structured public open spaces, recreational areas and green corridors within the node. At present, open spaces remain informal and underutilised.





Upgrading and proper management of cemetery infrastructure within the node is another important intervention required to address current service backlogs.

Additional projects include the upgrading of local road infrastructure connecting settlements within the node and improving accessibility along the P277-1 corridor. Improvements to water supply, and introduction of sanitation systems will also be necessary to support future development and improve service delivery.

The strengthening of local economic activity through the development of small-scale commercial facilities, informal trading areas and agricultural support services should also be encouraged within the node to support local livelihoods.

4.6.3.4 Proposed Development Objectives

Residential Areas

The residential character of the Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi node is defined by the three closely related settlements of Makonde, Mukula and Khubvi, which together form the core of the cluster.

Key focus areas include:

- Consolidation of development within the existing three settlement areas to prevent dispersed and unstructured expansion into surrounding agricultural and ecologically sensitive land.
- Promotion of infill development within the highlighted node boundary area before considering outward expansion to avoid sprawling of the node, and support cost-effective implementation of bulk municipal infrastructure within the area.
- Formalisation and tenure upgrading of the formalisation zone within the node boundary to further enable improved service delivery and infrastructure investment within the Node.
- Future residential development should be considered only on earmarked future residential areas, where proper township establishment process/ demarcation of sites must be followed in the extension and/or new residential developments in compliance with the Thulamela municipal and statutory requirements.

Mixed Use Area

The P277-1 corridor presents a key opportunity for mixed-use development that serves both local residents and the broader movement of people, goods and services through the node.





Key focus areas include:

- Mixed Use Area has been highlighted mainly along the P277-1 corridor, where a concentration of commercial, social and residential mixed-use activities is encouraged.
- The mixed-use area has been highlighted within the existing nodal areas of Makonde, Mukula and Khubvi, specifically at the intersection of the P277-1 Strategic Link and the D3708, along the Khubvi Filling station area, and the intersection of the P277-1 and the D3712 towards the Tshiombo area.
- Encourage the establishment and formalisation of local retail, service and small-scale commercial enterprises that serve surrounding villages and support local livelihoods.
- Support the Formalisation of informal trade by providing appropriately demarcated trading zones, basic trading infrastructure and support services to create a more orderly and productive trading environment within the node.
- Further encourage agricultural markets and produce trading facilities within the mixed-use areas to support local farmers and create linkages between agricultural production and the local economy within the node.
- Ensure that mixed-use development along the P277-1 route is guided by appropriate land use controls that maintain the integrity of the

corridor as a mobility spine while allowing for productive economic activity at designated nodal points.

- Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the land use management mechanisms and enforcement to discourage encroachment on the corridor.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a foundational component of the spatial and economic character of the Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi node and its surrounds.

Key focus areas include:

- Safeguard high-potential agricultural land in and around the node, particularly near the Mutale River, and existing horticultural production zones such as Khubvi, Damani, Tshivhilwi and Tshilonwe area where agriculture is prominent, ensuring to prevent from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
- Revitalise and support existing irrigation schemes in the surrounding area to improve agricultural productivity, ensure sustainable water use and strengthen rural food security.
- Promote agro-processing industries linked to the agricultural output of surrounding areas to diversify the local economy, reduce post-harvest losses and develop local and regional agricultural value chains.





- Support smallholder and community farming initiatives within areas identified as suitable for agricultural use to strengthen household food security and improve rural incomes.
- Develop agricultural support services within the node, including access to inputs, storage, transport links and advisory services, to improve the efficiency and viability of local farming operations.

Tourism

The Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi node is situated in an area with latent tourism potential, particularly through its proximity to water bodies, natural landscapes and existing though currently underutilised tourism routes and attractions.

Key focus areas include:

- Promote and revitalise tourism routes and attractions within and around the node that have fallen into disrepair, restoring their functionality and economic value as regional tourism assets.
- Develop eco-tourism opportunities linked to Mvuwe dam near Damani area, and further along Mutale River and other natural landscapes in and around the node, positioning the area as a destination for nature-based tourism within the broader TLM.
- This includes the promotion of tourism within the Mphaphuli Nature Reserve

- Continue to strengthen Makonde Stadium as an initiative to support community sport, events, and community-based tourism initiatives that draw on the cultural heritage, rural lifestyle and traditions of the settlements within the cluster, creating meaningful income opportunities for local residents.
- Promote agri-tourism experiences linked to the horticultural and irrigation farming activities in the surrounding area, offering visitors an authentic connection to the rural agricultural landscape.
- Aligned with environmental protection objectives, ensure that natural assets including dams, rivers and biodiversity corridors, are preserved and enhanced as core tourism attractions rather than compromised by unmanaged development.

Integrated Open Space System/ Municipal Open Space System

The natural environment surrounding Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi, including dams, rivers, wetlands and biodiversity corridors, forms a critical foundation for the long-term sustainability of the node and the well-being of its residents.

Key focus areas include:

- The highlighted Integrated Open Space System (IOSS) within the node should be preserved, creating structured public open spaces,





recreational areas and green corridors that connect natural assets across the settlement cluster.

- Ensure to protect all the water catchment areas, including the Mutale River, associated dams and wetlands, from encroachment by inappropriate development and unsustainable land use practices that threaten water quality and ecological function.
- Ensure that floodlines and natural watercourses remain undeveloped and are formally incorporated into the IOSS as protected and managed buffers, and no residential sites should be allocated along such areas.
- No sand mining or any other mining activity should take place without the necessary consents and approval of the Department of Minerals and Energy having been obtained
- Any development within the IOSS should only be permitted after environmental authorisation has been granted in terms of the environmental legislation.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure investment is a fundamental enabler of growth, service delivery and economic development within the Makonde/Mukula/Khubvi node.

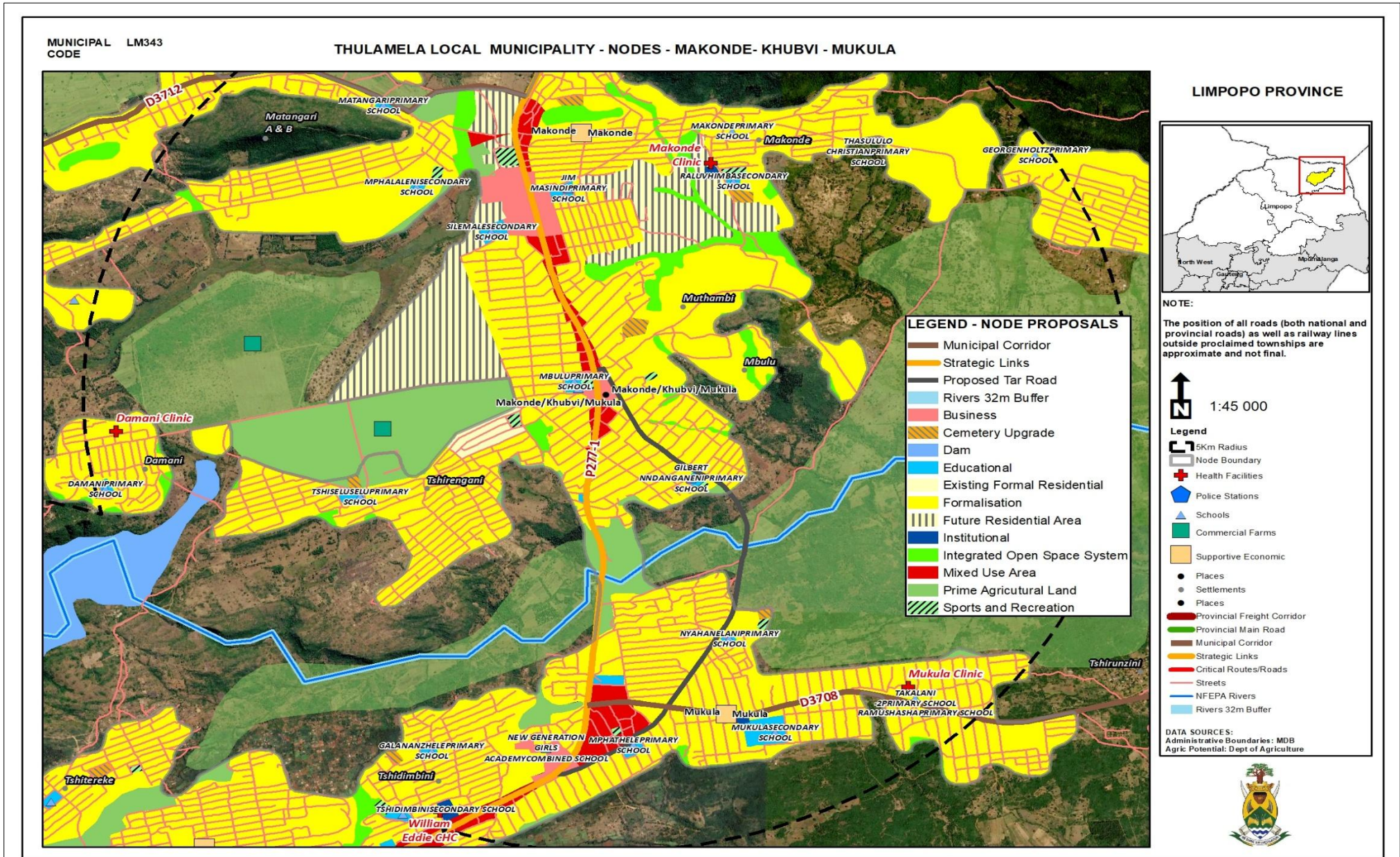
Key focus areas include:

- Upgrade of the D3712 critical route connecting Makonde Tshibvumo through Tshiombo and Manzwi to ensure improved accessibility and connectivity to other nodes and clusters.
- Upgrade of the route from Khubvi through Tshipako, Makwarani, and Tshidzivhe towards Tshilungwi to ensure improved accessibility, mobility and public transportation integration for communities.
- Ensure provision of stable water infrastructure within the node boundaries to improve and incentivise investments and development within the node.
- Leverage the node's strategic position along the P277-1 corridor to attract logistics, industrial and commercial investments that require good regional road connectivity, supported by appropriate infrastructure provision.





Map 45: Makonde/Khubvi/Mukula





4.6.4 Tshifudi/Gaba/Tshaulu Local Service Centre

The Tshifudi/Gaba/Tshaulu Local Service Centre Node functions as a localised service cluster which collectively provides basic services and community facilities to surrounding rural settlements.

The node accommodates several local facilities such as schools, community services, small retail outlets and informal trading activities that support the daily needs of nearby residents. These services serve an important function in improving access to essential facilities for communities located within the surrounding rural areas.

Compared with larger nodes within the municipality, economic activity within this cluster remains relatively small in scale and is largely oriented towards meeting local needs. Nevertheless, the node plays an important role in supporting rural livelihoods and reducing the need for residents to travel to larger centres such as Thohoyandou to access basic services.

4.6.4.1 Development Focus

Development within the Tshifudi/Gaba/Tshaulu Local Service Centre Node should focus on strengthening the node as a local service hub for surrounding rural settlements.

Priority should be given to improving access to community facilities and strengthening local service delivery infrastructure. The need to ensure that the existing schools, community facilities and local service centres continue to be maintained and bolstered as they are important in ensuring that the node

continues to serve the needs of surrounding communities, and its potential to promote other developments.

There is also an opportunity to support mixed-use development within the identified mixed-use area, to include local retail services, informal trading areas and small service-based businesses that cater to the needs of nearby residents. These activities play an important role in supporting local livelihoods and promoting rural economic activity.

Residential development within the node should focus primarily on infill development and consolidation of existing highlighted settlement areas, and discourage extensive outward expansion outside the highlighted area. This approach will help improve the efficiency of service delivery to be provided.

Importantly, infrastructure provisions remain the key priority to unlock potential development and investment in the area, to support the long-term sustainability of the settlements within the cluster.

Prime agricultural zone should be restricted to farming and tourism-related activities, with prime agricultural land preserved for optimal use i.e., Phaswana Irrigation Project. Residential expansions within agricultural areas should be limited, while the agricultural potential of the Luvuvhu River in the south and east is recognized as an opportunity for sustainable agricultural intensification. Any mining activities, including sand extraction, are conditional upon approval from the Department of Minerals and Energy, reinforcing responsible land management.





4.6.4.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Tshifudi/Gaba/Tshaulu Local Service Centre Node is to strengthen its role in providing accessible community facilities and local economic opportunities for immediate residents.

Future growth within the node should prioritise the consolidation of existing settlements and the strengthening of service infrastructure within the established areas of Tshifudi, Gaba and Tshaulu and avoid uncontrolled settlement expansion.

In the short term (0–5 years), development priorities should focus on addressing infrastructure backlogs, improving access to community services and supporting small-scale commercial activity within the node.

In the medium term (5–10 years), the focus should shift towards improving connectivity between the settlements within the cluster and surrounding villages through improved road infrastructure and mobility networks, connecting further to the Major Thohoyandou area.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should function as a stable and well-supported rural service centre that provides reliable access to community facilities and supports sustainable rural livelihoods.

Begwa, Tshidzini, Dimani, Phaswane, Gaba are the villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring.

4.6.4.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

One of the key priorities to support the role of the node is the upgrading and maintenance of existing community facilities, including schools, community halls and other public service infrastructure that supports surrounding villages.

Infrastructure improvements will also be critical. Ensuring a stable water supply systems and sanitation infrastructure will assist in addressing existing service delivery challenges.

The tarring of the highlighted proposed roads, including the D3666, should also be prioritised in order to improve connectivity between the settlements within the node and surrounding rural communities.

In addition, the establishment of formalised local trading areas and small-scale commercial facilities should be encouraged in order to support informal traders and local entrepreneurs especially within the highlighted Mixed-Use area.

4.6.4.4 Proposed Development Objectives

Residential

- Formalise or upgrade informal rural villages/settlements such as Begwa, Tshidzini, Dimani, Phaswane, Gaba which are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring.
- Moreover, other informal settlements/villages also earmarked for formalisation includes Manzemba, Buluni, Dimani, Dzwaboni as well as Tshidzini.





- Residential infill development (RDP's; BNG's; PSHDA's) and residential densification along the D3666 in Tshifudi and Dzivhadolo, south of Gonela Primary School. Furthermore, towards Tshaulu along the D3708 as well as on the south of the mixed-use area towards Masiwane going further down to Manzemba surrounded by commercial farms.
- Residential infill and densification should also be delivered as per the municipality various densification policies as the SDF identifies areas suitable for densification, and the Densification Policy therefore provides guidelines for densification, whereas the LUS assist in the implementation of these policies (SDF; Densification Policy) in application lodging.

Mixed-Use Area

- Formalise informal trade by providing demarcated trading zones/stalls for vendors in the proposed mixed-use area, which stretches from Tshifudi B toward Matshethse village along the D3708
- Land uses permitted in the mixed-use area: residential uses (main houses and backyard dwellings); small-scale commercial activities (spaza shops, informal trading, local markets); home-based enterprises (salons, food preparation, and repair services); light industrial uses (small workshops, carpentry, welding, and hardware-related activities) provided they do not create significant noise, pollution, or safety risks; Limited agricultural activities (home gardens,

small livestock keeping); community facilities (churches, crèches, halls, library, parks).

Agriculture

- Safeguard and sustainably utilise fertile agricultural areas in Tshaulu, Gaba, Tshifudi. Moreover, this local service centre is mainly surrounded by prime agricultural land with commercial farms and the Phaswane Irrigation Scheme, along the Luvuvhu river towards the CCLM municipal boundary.
- Agricultural opportunities include: subsistence farming (maize, vegetables, fruit); Small-scale livestock keeping (chickens, goats, cattle); smallholder farming on nearby communal land; peri-rural agriculture (community gardens, cooperative farming projects, small irrigation schemes; agro-processing (milling, drying, food preparation).

Integrated Open Space System/ Municipal Open Space System

- Protect water catchment areas such as Luvuvhu river, wetlands, and biodiversity corridors from encroachment and pollution especially along the D3666 and D3708 as they traverse Tshaulu, Gaba, Tshifudi nodal point.
- IOSS/MOSS environmental, social, and economic opportunities include: small-scale farming along riverbanks or unused land; environmental management (stormwater control, flood protection, conservation of natural features); recreation and community activities





(sports fields, gathering areas, cultural events); improve connectivity, providing pedestrian path.

Tourism

- Develop and promote a tourism strategy to tap into the tourism sector/market as a result of natural features, scenic views and Caves surrounding Tshaulu, Gaba, Tshifudi nodal point.
- Tourism opportunities include: cultural tourism (traditional practices, local cuisine, crafts, music, festivals); Eco-tourism (natural features: caves, rivers, forests, ridges, scenic landscapes) offering activities like hiking, birdwatching, and guided nature walks; community-based tourism (homestays, village tours, storytelling experiences; small-scale craft markets; resorts; parks golf estates.

Mining

- Exploit Tshaulu, Gaba, Tshifudi strategic location along the D3666 toward CCLM, as well as the D3708 towards the R524 to attract logistics, industrial and commercial investments.
- Promote stone crushing industries, small scale mining as part of this local service center industrial development in line with NEMA regulations.
- Mining opportunities include: artisanal and small-scale mining (extraction of sand, gravel, clay, or stone for local construction); limited mineral extraction (through available deposits); value-adding

activities (brick-making from clay/mud or processing building materials, which can support local economic development).

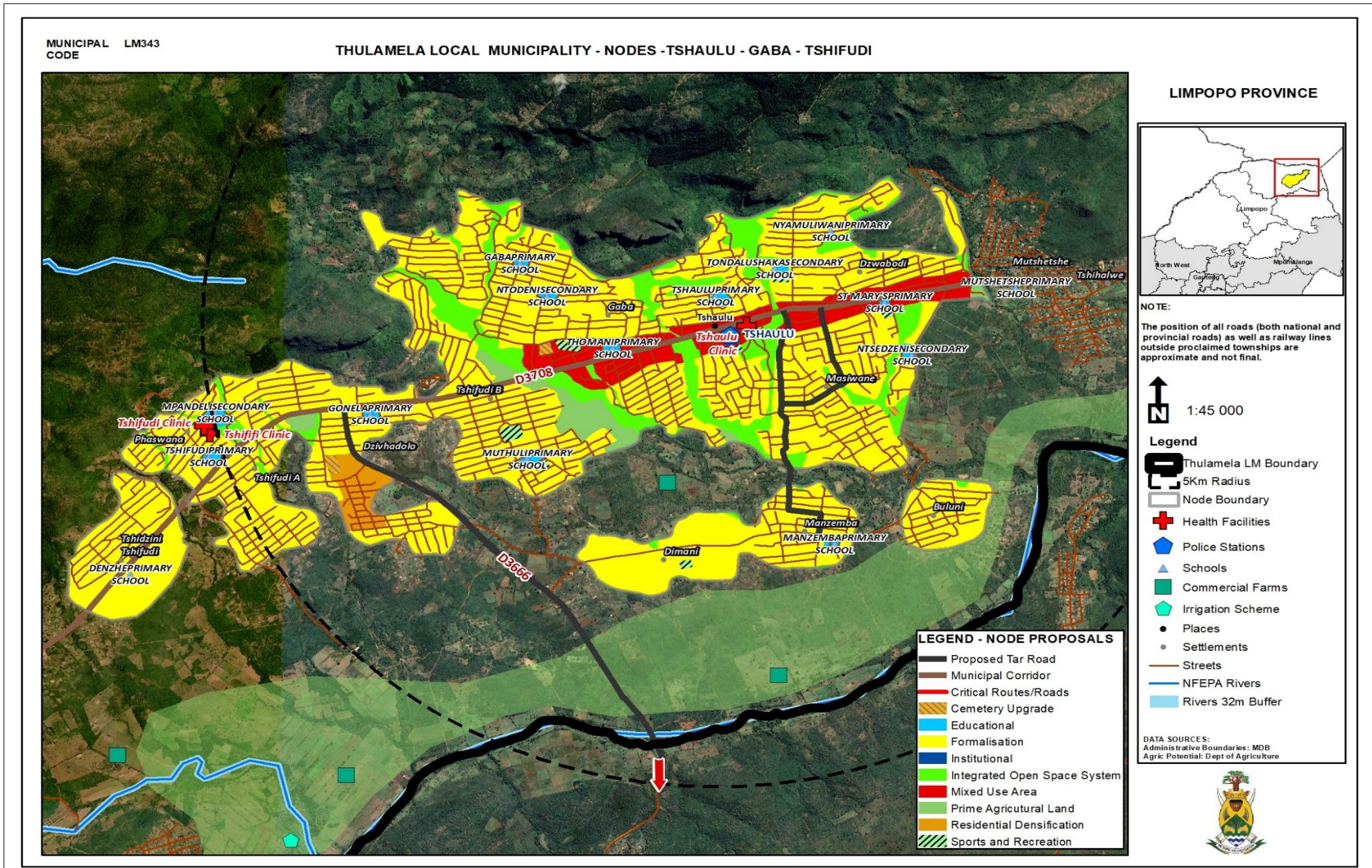
Infrastructure

- Invest in the provision, upgrading and maintenance of economic infrastructure or bulk infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity, stormwater).
- Infrastructure opportunities include: provision, expansion and upgrading of water supply systems (boreholes, communal standpipes, and piped networks); sanitation infrastructure can be improved through ventilated pit latrines, eco-sanitation systems, and, where feasible, simplified sewer networks); enhance road and transport infrastructure (gravel road upgrades such as D3666, and the residential collector towards Manzemba and Dimani); pedestrian pathways; electricity provision {grid extension, renewable energy solutions (solar power), can improve living conditions and support small businesses}; stormwater drainage systems to reduce flooding; waste management services (collection points, recycling initiatives); social infrastructure (schools, clinics, community hall/MPCC, library, parks/public open spaces).





Map 46: Tshaulu/Gaba/Tshifudi





4.6.5 Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe Local Service Centre

The Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe Local Service Centre functions as an important local service centre within the settlement hierarchy of TLM. The node is strategically located along the D3681 route in proximity to Donald Fraser Hospital, one of the key healthcare facilities serving the northern parts of the municipality.

The node is composed of the settlements of Vhufuli, Tshitereke and Vondwe, together with nearby villages such as Gouldville, Tshilapfene and Makhuvha. These settlements collectively support a range of community facilities and small-scale economic activities that serve surrounding rural communities.

A corridor of mixed-use activity has developed along the road between the hospital and Vondwe, including retail outlets, hardware stores, schools, a post office and informal trading areas. Public transport activity is also concentrated within this area, making the node an important access point for surrounding communities.

Within the broader spatial structure of the municipality, the node plays an important role in improving access to health services, supporting local economic activity and providing basic services to surrounding rural settlements located in the northern parts of the municipality.

4.6.5.1 Development Focus

Development within the Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe Local Service Centre should focus on strengthening the node as a health-service, mixed-use and rural service centre that supports surrounding villages.

A key development focus area is the consolidation of mixed-use activities around the hospital and along the D3681 corridor. This area has a strong economic potential due to the concentration of services, accessibility and movement of people. Development should therefore encourage clustering of both formal and informal businesses in this location.

Residential development within the node should prioritise the formalisation of upgrading of existing settlements, particularly in areas where layout plans have already been approved, such as Tshitereke. The formalisation process should support improved infrastructure provision and better integration of community facilities, as identified in the IDP.

Environmental protection is also an important development consideration. Environmentally sensitive areas, including floodlines, wetlands and watercourses associated with the surrounding rivers as highlighted, must be protected from development as part of the municipal integrated open space system.





Prime Agricultural land highlighted within the surrounding area should be preserved for farming activities, as many households depend on agriculture for subsistence and local economic activity.

Infrastructure provision remains important to promote sustainable development and investments, particularly improvements to water supply, provision of sanitation services and internal road networks, will be essential.

4.6.5.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe Local Service Centre is to strengthen the node as a well-structured local service node that is also centred on healthcare support centre within TLM.

Future growth should focus on strengthening development around the existing mixed-use corridor between Donald Fraser Hospital and Vondwe, while supporting residential formalisation and service upgrading within surrounding settlements. This will assist in creating a more structured and accessible service centre for surrounding communities.

In the short term (0–5 years), priority should be given to settlement formalisation, infrastructure upgrades and the improvement of local commercial activity around the hospital and transport areas.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development efforts should focus on strengthening the node as a local economic and service hub through the development of supporting community facilities, improved transport infrastructure and better integration of surrounding settlements.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should function as a stable local service centre that provides accessible healthcare support services, local economic opportunities and improved infrastructure for surrounding rural communities.

Matatshe, Vondwe, Tshitereke, Ngwenani ya Ha-Mapholi, Tshilapfene are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring.

4.6.5.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

Several strategic projects and interventions are required to strengthen the functionality of the Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe Local Service Centre Node.

One of the key projects is improving the transport facility close to Donald Fraser Hospital to support existing transport activity and improve accessibility for residents and visitors.

The establishment of a Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC) within the economic opportunity zone is also recommended in order to





provide integrated government and community services to surrounding settlements.

Residential formalisation projects within Tshitereke should be prioritised in order to support tenure security and enable the upgrading of municipal infrastructure and community facilities.

Infrastructure upgrades will also be required, particularly improvements to internal roads and water provisions. These interventions are necessary to address existing service delivery challenges and support future development.

Support for small-scale agriculture and local farming activities should be encouraged through the protection of agricultural land and the promotion of sustainable land management practices.

4.6.5.4 Proposed Development Objectives

Residential

- Prioritise densification within the existing Vhufuli/Tshitereke/Vondwe settlement and designated residential zones to ensure efficient land use.
- Promote formalisation and tenure upgrading to improve service delivery and support infrastructure investment.

- Encourage infill development within the existing settlement boundary before considering outward expansion to prevent urban sprawl.
- Ensure all new extensions and residential developments follow proper township establishment and site demarcation in line with Thulamela Local Municipality requirements.
- Promote mixed-income housing within densification areas to support spatial inclusion and reduce informal settlement growth.

Mixed-Use Area

- Formalise the existing linear development along the D3681 corridor into a designated mixed-use development zone.
- Promote a blend of retail, light commercial, community facilities, and residential uses to support daily needs within walking distance.
- Encourage infill development on underutilised and vacant land between existing activity clusters to reduce sprawl.
- Introduce clear land-use transitions from high-intensity commercial at the hospital node to lower-density residential edges.





Agriculture

- Designate riverine areas (especially along the Mutshindudi River) as priority agricultural production zones for intensified crop and orchard development.
- Strengthen subsistence farmers through training, extension services, and input support to improve yields and farming practices.
- Introduce controlled grazing systems and rotational grazing areas to reduce land degradation and improve livestock productivity.
- Promote small-scale fruit processing and packaging facilities to shift production from subsistence to market-oriented agriculture.
- Develop small-scale irrigation schemes and water-efficient farming methods to reduce dependence on rainfall and improve productivity.
- Encourage formation of farmer cooperatives to improve access to markets, inputs, training, and shared infrastructure.
- Limit agricultural expansion in mountainous northern areas and direct farming activities to more suitable valley and riverine zones.

- Strengthen institutional capacity through local extension officers and partnerships with agricultural agencies to support modern farming practices.
- Introduce low-cost, adaptable modern farming techniques (e.g., drip irrigation, protected cultivation) suited to current local capacity.
- Promote diversification into high-value crops such as mangoes and avocados for local and regional markets to increase household income.

Integrated Open Space System/ Municipal Open Space System

- Clearly map, demarcate, and legally protect the IOSS to prevent encroachment.
- Enforce buffer zones around drainage lines and flood-prone areas.
- Relocate households from high-risk flood and drainage areas to safer land.
- Upgrade and maintain stormwater drainage systems.
- Restore wetlands and degraded drainage areas through rehabilitation measures.
- Strengthen land-use enforcement against illegal development.
- Develop a local flood risk management plan with identified hazard zones.





- Conduct community awareness on flood risks and drainage protection.
- Align all development planning with natural drainage systems.
- Implement monitoring systems for encroachment and flood response.
- Promote collaboration with Traditional Authorities and provide alternative serviced land to support orderly settlement growth.

Infrastructure

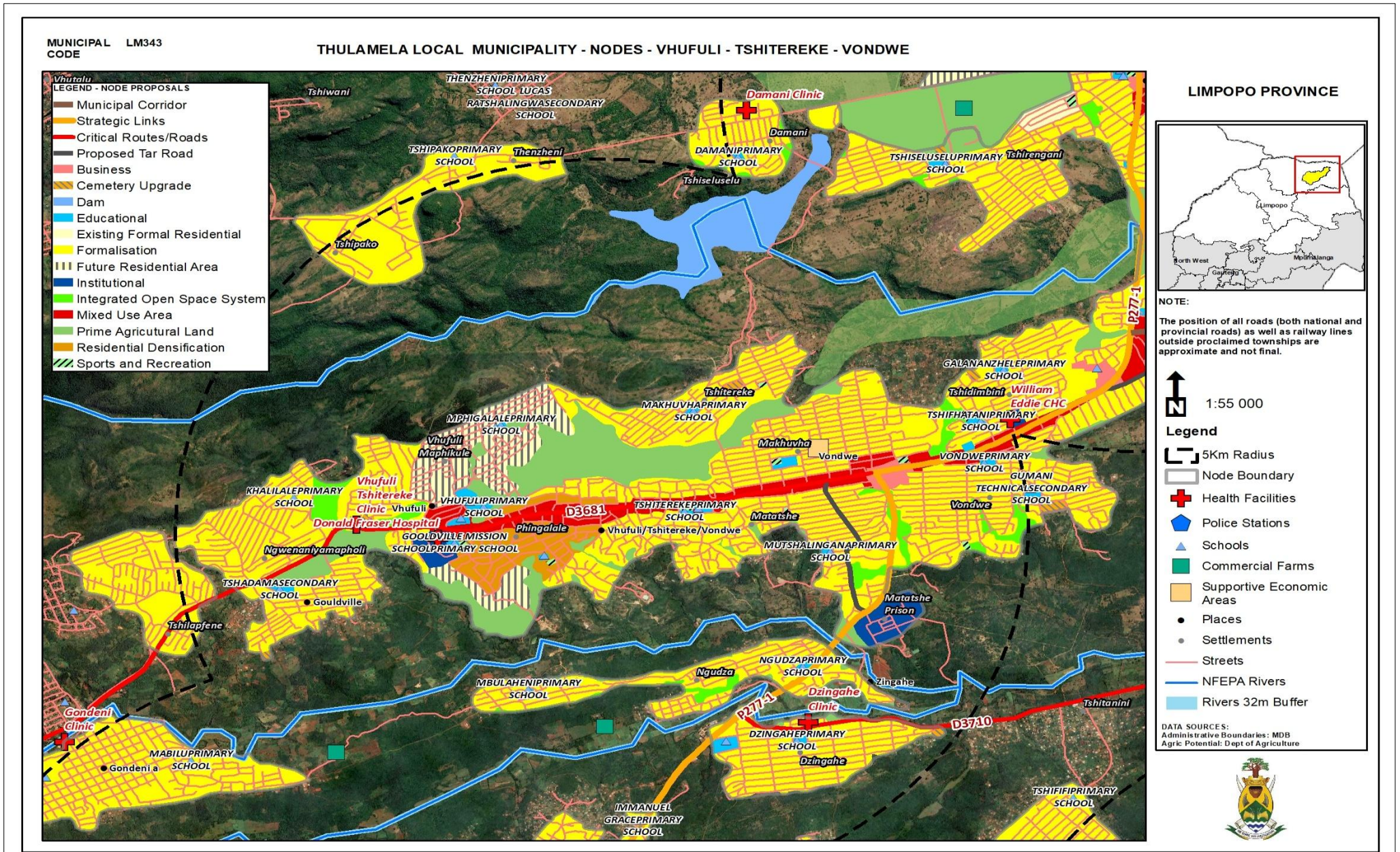
- A coordinated approach combining infrastructure investment and strategic spatial planning is required to support sustainable development and improved living conditions.
- Upgrading and maintaining the road network will improve accessibility, strengthen connectivity between settlements, and enhance local economic activity by reducing travel time and transport costs.
- Improving water supply systems is essential to ensure reliable access to clean water, while the introduction of appropriate sanitation solutions will address service delivery gaps, reduce environmental pollution, and improve public health outcomes.

- The development of formal economic infrastructure, such as markets and business hubs, will stimulate local economic growth, support small business development, and provide structured trading environments for informal enterprises.
- Expanding and upgrading social facilities, including schools, clinics, and community centres, will reduce pressure on existing services and ensure adequate provision in line with population growth.
- Establishing formal public transport infrastructure, including taxi ranks, shelters, and loading facilities, will improve mobility, enhance safety, and support efficient transport operations.





Map 47: Vhufuli/Vondwe/Tshitereke





4.6.6 Lwamondo/Tshisaulu Local Service Centre

The Lwamondo/Tshisaulu Local Service Centre functions as an important local service and corridor-based development node within Thulamela Local Municipality. The node is strategically located along the R524 regional corridor, which connects the municipality with neighbouring Makhado Local Municipality and provides important regional accessibility.

The node serves a number of surrounding rural settlements including Mathule, Tshifulanani, Khumbe and parts of Dzwerani, while also supporting more distant villages such as Manamane and sections of Tshisaulu. These settlements rely on the node for access to basic services, small-scale commercial activities and social facilities.

The central part of the node includes the formal township area of Tshifulanani, while the surrounding areas consist primarily of informal rural settlements. The presence of this formal township structure provides a foundation for more organised development and service provision within the node.

Due to its location along the R524 corridor, Lwamondo also has the potential to function as an important local economic hub that serves both local communities and passing traffic moving between regional centres such as Thohoyandou and areas within Makhado Municipality.

4.6.6.1 Development Focus

Development within the Lwamondo/Tshisaulu Local Service Centre should focus on strengthening the node as a corridor-based service centre with integrated mixed-use development and strong agricultural protection.

Residential development should prioritise densification within existing formal settlement areas, particularly within Tshifulanani, in order to promote efficient land use and reduce pressure on surrounding high-potential agricultural land especially along the Dzindi river between Lwamondo and Tshisaulu. Formalisation and tenure upgrading within designated areas will also be important to support improved infrastructure provision and secure land tenure.

Mixed-use development should be encouraged along key sections of the R524 corridor highlighted as Mixed-Use Area. These areas can accommodate a combination of commercial, social and residential activities, creating a more vibrant and functional service centre that supports both local residents and visitors travelling through the corridor.

There should also be monitoring of the identified surface sand mining occurring along the river for brick manufacturing to ensure that it doesn't affect residential developments and prime agricultural land.

Significantly, environmental management and open space protection should also form part of the development focus. Environmentally sensitive areas, including floodlines and natural watercourses, must remain undeveloped as part of the municipal integrated open space system.

Densification should be encouraged within the highlighted Residential densification zone, which further supports efficient land use while reducing pressure on prime agricultural land. Future residential developments and extensions should be restricted to earmarked areas and must follow formal





planning procedures, including township establishment and demarcation of sites, to ensure compliance with municipal and statutory requirements

4.6.6.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Lwamondo/Tshisaulu Local Service Centre is to develop a well-structured corridor service node that supports local economic development while also protecting the surrounding agricultural land and sensitive ecological areas.

Future growth should focus on consolidating development around the existing settlement areas and along the R524 corridor while preventing uncontrolled settlement expansion into high-potential agricultural land. Development should aim to strengthen the node's role as a local economic and service centre for surrounding villages.

In the short term (0–5 years), priority should be given to residential formalisation, infrastructure upgrades and the strengthening of mixed-use activity areas along the corridor.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development should focus on expanding economic opportunities through corridor-based commercial activities and upgrading of the R524 route and internal streets.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should evolve into a stable corridor service centre that supports agriculture, tourism and local economic development while maintaining sustainable land use practices.

Mapate, Khumbe, Matatani, Itsani, Belemu, Tshiema, Tshisaulu are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring.

4.6.6.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

One of the key infrastructure projects involves the upgrading of the R524 corridor, particularly the section between Lwamondo and Tshilidzini Hospital, to accommodate high traffic volumes and improve regional connectivity.

The development of mixed-use economic opportunity zones along the R524 corridor, especially in areas highlighted as Mixed-Used Area, should also be prioritised in order to stimulate local economic activity and create employment opportunities.

The industrial activities, such as sand mining and brick manufacturing, should also be monitored and regulated. The protection and sustainable management of surrounding high-potential agricultural land should be supported through appropriate land use controls and sustainable farming initiatives that contribute to food security and rural livelihoods.

Residential formalisation and tenure upgrading within the Tshifulanani area should also be prioritised to enable improved service delivery and infrastructure development such as internal street upgrading and sanitation infrastructure.

4.6.6.4 Proposed Development Objectives

Residential Areas

Residential development should promote consolidation, densification and improved living conditions within a structured settlement framework.





Key focus areas include:

- Prioritisation of densification within the Tshifulanani formal township and designated residential densification zones highlighted on the map below to promote efficient land use.
- Formalisation and tenure upgrading of the highlighted residential area to enable improved service delivery and infrastructure investment within the Node.
- Promotion of infill development within the highlighted node boundary before considering outward expansion to avoid sprawling of the node.
- Proper township establishment process/ demarcation of sites must be followed in the extension and/or new residential developments in compliance with the Thulamela municipal and statutory requirements.
- Development of mixed-income housing opportunities within the densification zones to support spatial inclusion and reduce informal settlement growth.

Mixed-Use Area

Mixed-use development should leverage the strategic location of the node along the R524 to support economic activity and service provision.

Key focus areas include:

- Mixed-use developments are encouraged along the highlighted Mixed-Use Area along the R524 Provincial Freight Corridor, where a mixture of compatible land uses is supported and should be intensified, excluding uses of heavy industrial and noxious substances

- Clustering of commercial, social, and residential activities to create vibrant and accessible activity zones for residents and through traffic as well.
- Formalisation and support of informal trade through the provision of trading infrastructure, demarcated areas and services.
- Development of corridor-based economic opportunity zones targeting passing traffic and local demand within the Mixed-Use Area and Business area.
- Ensure that mixed-use development is guided by appropriate design standards that maintain pedestrian-friendly environments, safe access and aesthetic consistency along the Provincial Freight Corridor.
- Strengthening of nodal activity points at key intersections and access points, such as in Tshifulanani, Zwikwengani and Tshisahulu, by providing mixed-use development and relevant services.

Agriculture

Agriculture should be protected and enhanced as a key economic and livelihood component within the node.

Key focus areas include:

- Safeguard high-potential agricultural land, particularly along the Dzindi River between Lwamondo and Tshisaulu, from encroachment by residential and other incompatible land uses.





- Apply appropriate land use controls to prevent conversion of productive agricultural land and to maintain its long-term viability for food production and rural livelihoods.
- Support for subsistence and small-scale commercial farming activities.
- Promote agro-processing industries in surrounding rural areas, considering the agricultural activities occurring within and around the node, in order to diversify the local economy, create employment and develop local and regional agricultural value chains.
- Support sustainable farming initiatives that contribute to food security, rural income generation and the productive use of fertile land within and around the node.
- Encourage smallholder and community agriculture within areas identified as suitable for agricultural use to strengthen household food security and reduce economic vulnerability.
- Continue to restrict the development footprint from expanding outward, potentially encroaching on productive agricultural land, but rather encourage residential development and growth that is directed inward within the existing residential boundary.

Tourism

Tourism development should be positioned as a complementary economic activity linked to the corridor and the surrounding rural landscape.



Key focus areas include:

- Leverage the R524 corridor route as a tourism connector between Thohoyandou, Makhado and surrounding destinations, positioning Lwamondo/Tshisaulu node as a meaningful stop along the route.
- Encourage opportunities for tourism-related facilities such as rest stops, local produce markets, and hospitality establishments within the node, emboldened by current developments of lodges and guesthouses.
- Align tourism development with the protection of ecological and scenic assets, ensuring that natural watercourses, open spaces and the landscape character of the area are preserved as tourism draws rather than compromised by development.

Mining

Mining-related activities should be regulated to minimise conflict with other land uses and environmental systems.



Key focus areas include:

- Constant monitoring and regulation of surface sand mining and brick-making activities in the highlighted mining area.
- Ensuring that mining activities do not encroach on adjacent residential areas or high-potential agricultural land.
- There should be identification of appropriate zones for small-scale mining activities where impacts can be effectively managed.
- Mitigation of environmental and social impacts such as erosion, dust and water pollution.





Integrated Open Space System/ Municipal Open Space System

Environmental systems should be protected and integrated into the spatial structure of the node.

Key focus areas include:

- Ensure conservation of biodiversity corridors and environmentally sensitive landscapes highlighted as the Integrated Open Space System on the Nodes map.
- Ensure Protection of rivers, dams, wetlands and floodlines, particularly along the Dzindi River, to form part of the Integrated Open Space System.
- Encourage the establishment of ecological buffer zones to prevent development encroachment into sensitive areas.
- Integration of natural open spaces into a broader municipal open space network.
- Use of open space systems for passive recreation and community benefit where appropriate.
- Enforcement of environmental compliance for all developments affecting sensitive areas.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure investment should reinforce the corridor function of the node and support sustainable growth.

Key focus areas include:

- Upgrading, maintenance and Widening of the R524 Provincial Freight Corridor within the node, from Tshifulanani at the municipal boundary towards Tshilidzini Hospital.
- Improvement of internal road networks within the node boundary and surrounding settlements, especially on the formalised Townships such as Tshifulanani.
- Ensure upgrading and provision of water, upgraded internal streets and Alignment of infrastructure provision with densification and settlement formalisation initiatives.
- Enhancement of public transport facilities and accessibility along the corridor.
- There should be provision of infrastructure to support mixed-use and economic activity zones.







4.6.7 Tshikombani Local Service Centre

Tshikombani Local Service Centre is located near the municipal boundary with Makhado Local Municipality (MKLM) and forms part of the western gateway into the municipality. It comprises several surrounding rural settlements, including Tshikombani, Dopeni, Tshirenzeni, Mandala Fondwe and Khalavha. These villages rely on the node for access to small-scale commercial services, public facilities and transportation links although the reliance is further extended to Siloam within Makhado Local Municipality.

Economic activity within the node is primarily concentrated at the intersection of the R523 and D449 routes, where small retail outlets, informal trading activities and service-related businesses are located. The node benefits from good regional connectivity through the R523 corridor, which links the municipality with regional centres in the Makhado Municipal area.

Surrounding areas remain informal and do not yet have approved general plans. As such, the node plays an important role in improving access to infrastructure and services for surrounding communities.

4.6.7.1 Development Focus

Development within the Tshikombani Local Service Centre should focus on strengthening the node as a gateway rural service centre with corridor-based economic activity and settlement formalisation.

Residential development should prioritise formalisation and tenure upgrading within designated areas to improve land tenure security and support the provision of essential infrastructure and services. Residential extensions should

be carefully managed and limited to areas identified for future residential development in order to prevent uncontrolled settlement expansion.

Mixed-use development should be encouraged along the R523 corridor, particularly within the area highlighted as the Mixed-Use area. Additional mixed-use opportunities exist along the D449 route and around the intersection of these routes, where an economic opportunity zone has been identified.

Development within these areas should promote the clustering of both formal and informal businesses, creating a vibrant activity node that serves both local communities and travellers moving along the corridor.

Environmental protection is also an important development consideration within the node. Sensitive areas, particularly along the banks of the Nzhelele River, must be protected from development in order to prevent erosion, maintain ecological integrity and reduce flood risk. Development is starting to sprawl towards the river and this should be monitored and discouraged.

Agricultural land within the surrounding areas should also be preserved for farming activities, which remain an important component of local livelihoods. And therefore, encouragement of development on the prime agricultural area should be discouraged, with development mainly prioritised and consolidated within the existing residential and mixed-use area.

Dopeni, Mandala, Tshivhilidulu, Shanzha, Khalavha, and Tshiheni are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring.





4.6.7.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Tshikombani Local Service Centre is to develop a well-structured gateway service node that supports rural settlements while strengthening corridor-based economic activity within TLM connected to Siloam in MKLM.

Future growth should focus on consolidating development within existing settlement areas while strengthening the mixed-use activity corridor along the R523 route and the D449 route as highlighted. Development should be carefully managed to prevent uncontrolled settlement expansion into environmentally sensitive areas and prime agricultural land.

In the short term (0–5 years), development priorities should focus on settlement formalisation, infrastructure provision and upgrading, especially important access and collector routes, water connections, and strengthening local commercial activities at the R523 and D449 intersection.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development should focus on expanding corridor-based economic activities and improving connectivity between surrounding villages and the Tshikombani service centre.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should evolve into a stable rural service centre that provides improved access to services, supports local economic development and strengthens regional connectivity between municipalities.

4.6.7.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

One of the key projects is the promotion of the economic opportunity zone at the intersection of the R523 and D449 routes, where both formal and informal commercial activities can be consolidated and supported.

Implementation of the flood control measure along the R523 and D449 to prevent the adverse effects of flooding that frequently occur during high rainfall seasons.

Settlement formalisation and tenure upgrading projects should be prioritised within the surrounding villages in order to improve land tenure security and facilitate infrastructure investment.

Upgrading road infrastructure, most especially the bus and taxi route connecting Khalavha, Tshivhilidulu, Makhavhani, Shanzha and Dopeni should also be prioritised to improve accessibility, quality of living and promoting further economic development.

Infrastructure improvements related to water supply especially on the already available water connections without water flow, will also be essential to support sustainable development, investments and improve living conditions within surrounding settlements.

Environmental protection measures should be implemented along the banks of the Nzhelele River to prevent destruction and protect sensitive ecological areas from development encroachment.





4.6.7.4 Proposed Development Objectives

Residential

- Promote infill development within the rural boundary, this prevents sprawl and maximise the existing residential area.
- Educate traditional authorities about the demarcation process, as they play a critical role in land allocation.
- Promote formalisation to improve service delivery, this should be done in conjunction with a feasibility study because people residing are of different social status.
- Gravel roads should be tarred; this will improve accessibility.

Mixed-Use Area

Mixed-use development should leverage along the R523 and D449 to support economic activity and service provision.

- Formalise and support informal traders through the provision of designated zones for selling which will be easily accessible.
- Collaborate organisations such as Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) to provide legal support and incentives for the informal traders.
- Have designated spaces for loading and offloading zones for hardwares such as Smart Build along the R523 and Ashrafi along the D449.

- Access to various health care services. For example, at Dr M.B Dagada surgery people can visit a general practitioner, optometrist, dentist and a dialysis unit. Opposite Usave, people can purchase medicines at a pharmacy.
- Upgrade and maintain the roads along the intersection, the R523 and D449 along the Juicy complex as it has been damaged by the severe rain encountered in 2026.

Agriculture

Agriculture should be protected, as residential areas have encroached them.

- Support subsistence and small-scale farming activities.
- Promote the use of irrigation systems such as drip to optimise water use efficiency, reduce water loss and improve crop yields.
- Restrict development along the agricultural land.
- Grazing areas must be demarcated outside the high agricultural potential area, so that crop yield may not be affected.
- Develop an agriculture strategic master plan for Tshikombani node to protect the land earmarked for agricultural development.

Integrated Open Space System (IOSS)/ Municipal Open Space System (MOSS)

- Ensure conservation along the Nzhelele river as it offer ecosystem services such as water purification and flood attenuation.





- Promote ecological buffer zones to prevent development along sensitive areas such as riverbanks. For example, along Tshikombani and Mandala strip, people have encroached the riverbanks through residential development and this makes them prone to floods and exposed to water-borne diseases.
- Promote recreation services such as park, which is eco and user friendly i.e have designated walkways and seating area.

Infrastructure

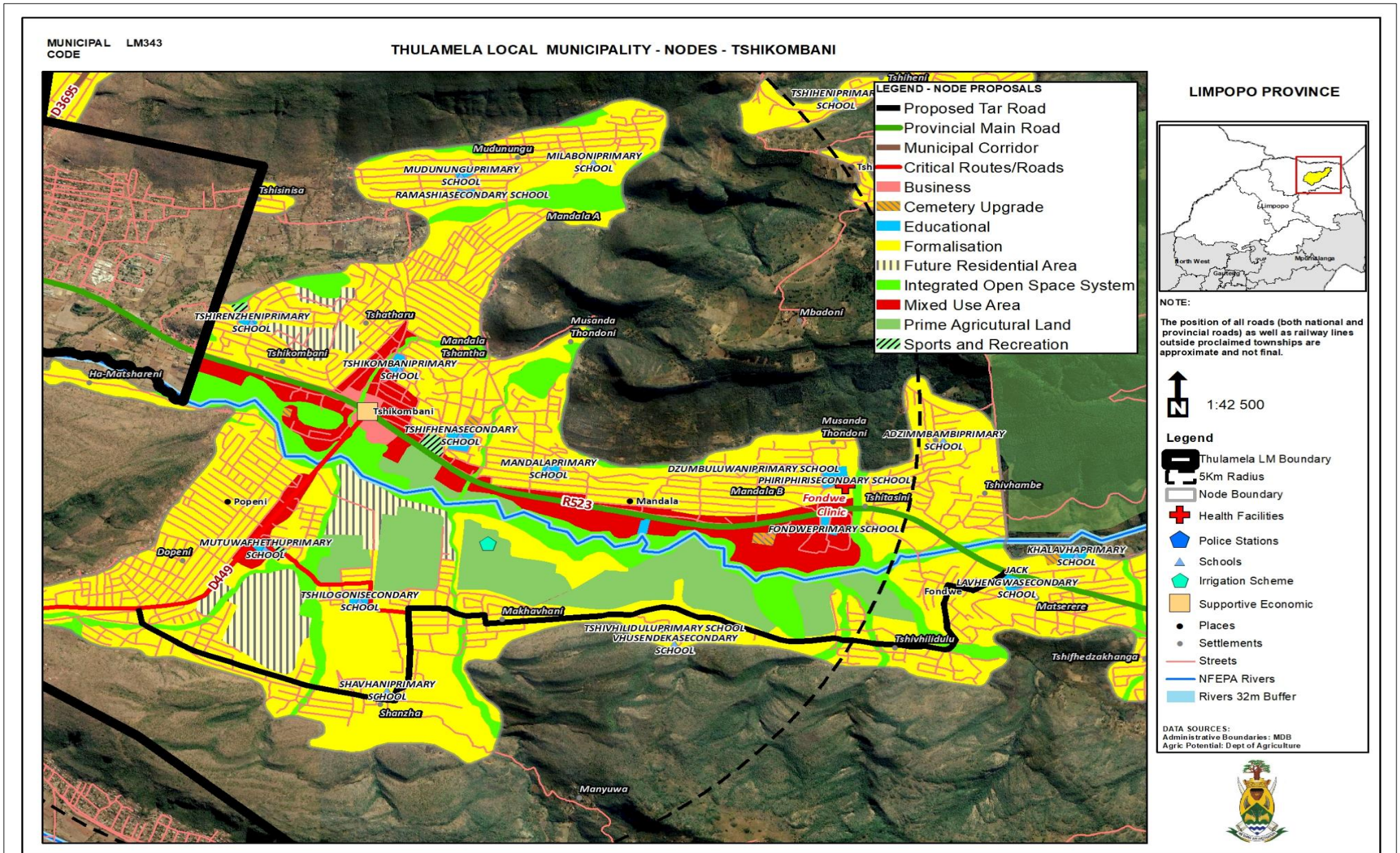
Infrastructure drives the economy of an area.

- Upgrade street trading facilities along the strip shops opposite the Juicy Complex.
- All roads, the R523 and D449 should be upgraded, this will improve traffic flow and safety. For example, the upgrade and maintenance can include paving, regravelling, and tarring gravel roads, with signages and pedestrian walkways which have eco-friendly designs that manage stormwater.
- Promote the use of ICT infrastructure, within businesses, schools and health-care services. For example, this can help small businesses in technology innovation and equip residents with ICT related skills.





Map 49: Tshikombani Local Service Centre





4.6.8 Tshixwadza Local Service Centre

The Tshixwadza Local Service Centre functions as a rural service node within the northwestern parts of TLM. The node provides a very few basic community services and small-scale commercial activities to surrounding villages, including Mabulo, Dzamba, Mapuloni and Luheni.

Tshixwadza is strategically located on a ridge between deep valleys and is connected to surrounding settlements through the D3695 and D3690 road network. These routes provide important linkages between the surrounding rural villages and larger nodes such as Tshilamba and Thohoyandou.

The settlements within the node largely consist of informal rural villages with limited access to social amenities and infrastructure. As a result, the node plays an important role in supporting rural communities through the provision of essential services, local retail opportunities, community facilities and connectivity to other surrounding settlements and larger nodes.

4.6.8.1 Development Focus

Development within the Tshixwadza Local Service Centre should focus on improving the living conditions within existing settlements while strengthening local service provision and economic activities.

Residential development should prioritise secure land tenure and improve access to basic services such as water, sanitation, schools and clinics which will be the core in boosting any economic activities within the area. Future residential expansion should be limited to areas identified as suitable for

development and must avoid environmentally sensitive areas, steep slopes and valleys.

Mixed-use development should be encouraged within designated area along key routes and at the intersections in order to support small-scale commercial activities, informal trading and community services. The clustering of economic activities in accessible locations will help strengthen the role of the node as a local service centre for surrounding villages.

Environmental protection must remain an important development consideration within the node due to its location and the sensitive topography and ecological systems in the surrounding valleys and drainage lines. Floodline areas, streams and environmentally sensitive landscapes should be protected from development unless appropriate environmental authorisation has been obtained.

Agricultural land surrounding the node should also be preserved for farming and grazing activities, which remain important for supporting rural livelihoods and local food security.

Gogogo, Luheni, Dzamba, Makuleni, Madatshitshi, Khakhu are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring.

4.6.8.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Tshixwadza Local Service Centre is to develop a well-structured rural service node that supports surrounding villages through improved service provision, enhanced accessibility and strengthened small-scale economic activities.





Future growth within the node should focus on consolidating development within existing settlement areas while gradually improving infrastructure and community facilities to encourage even further investments and development. Settlement expansion should be carefully managed in order to prevent encroachment into environmentally sensitive areas, steep terrain and agricultural land.

In the short term (0–5 years), development priorities should focus on settlement formalisation, infrastructure upgrading and the provision of basic community facilities to improve living conditions within surrounding villages, especially the upgrading of the D3695 connecting to Tshilamba to a fully tarred road.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development should focus on strengthening mixed-use activity areas along key access routes and improving connectivity between Tshixwadza and other surrounding settlements.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should evolve into a stable rural service centre that provides reliable access to community facilities, supports local economic activities and improves the overall spatial structure of surrounding rural settlements.

4.6.8.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

Settlement formalisation and tenure upgrading programmes should be prioritised within surrounding villages in order to secure land rights and support the provision of basic infrastructure which will be core for encouraging development.

The establishment of a Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC) within the node should be considered in order to provide integrated community, administrative and social services to surrounding rural communities and further encourage development of other activities.

Upgrading of the D3695 from the R523 in MKLM towards P277/1 road linkage should also be prioritised to improve accessibility, support public transport routes and strengthen connectivity between Tshixwadza and nearby nodes such as Tshilamba and Thohoyandou. This can be implemented in collaboration with the MKLM for the portion which falls under their municipal jurisdiction.

Environmental protection measures should also be implemented to conserve sensitive landscapes, valleys and watercourses within the node.

And support for agricultural activities should also be encouraged through programmes that strengthen local farming and grazing practices in surrounding rural areas, and encourage further agricultural activities within the area which is part of the core economic activities in the area.

4.6.8.4 Proposed Development Objectives

Residential

- Formalise or upgrade informal rural villages/settlements such as Gogogo, Luheni, Dzamba, Makuleni, Madatshitshi, Khakhu, which are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring.
- Moreover, other informal settlements also earmarked for formalisation includes Mukondeni, Matshavhawe as well as Mabulo.





- Residential infill development (RDP's; BNG's; PSHDA's) or future residential along the D3685 closer to Ratshilumela Secondary School, as well as on the east of the mixed-use area.

Mixed-Use Area

- Formalise informal trade by providing demarcated trading zones/stalls for vendors in the proposed mixed-use area
- Land uses permitted in the mixed-use area: residential uses (main houses and backyard dwellings); small-scale commercial activities (spaza shops, informal trading, local markets); home-based enterprises (salons, food preparation, and repair services); light industrial uses (small workshops, carpentry, welding, and hardware-related activities) provided they do not create significant noise, pollution, or safety risks; Limited agricultural activities (home gardens, small livestock keeping); community facilities (churches, crèches, MPCC).

Agriculture

Safeguard and sustainably utilise fertile agricultural areas

- Agricultural opportunities include: subsistence farming (maize, vegetables, fruit); Small-scale livestock keeping (chickens, goats, cattle); smallholder farming on nearby communal land; peri-rural agriculture (community gardens, cooperative farming projects, small

irrigation schemes; agro-processing (milling, drying, food preparation).

Integrated Open Space System (IOSS)/ Municipal Open Space System (MOSS)

- Protect water catchment areas such as rivers, wetlands, ridges and biodiversity corridors from encroachment and pollution especially along the D3685 and D3695 as they traverse Tshixwadza nodal point.
- IOSS/MOSS environmental, social, and economic opportunities includes: small-scale farming along riverbanks or unused land; environmental management (stormwater control, flood protection, conservation of natural features); recreation and community activities (sports fields, gathering areas, cultural events); improve connectivity, providing pedestrian path.

Tourism

- Develop and promote a tourism strategy to tap into the tourism sector/market as a result of natural features, scenic views and ridges surrounding Tshixwadza nodal point.
- Tourism opportunities include: cultural tourism (traditional practices, local cuisine, crafts, music, festivals); Eco-tourism (natural features: Lake Fundudzi, rivers, forests, ridges, scenic landscapes) offering activities like hiking, birdwatching, and guided nature walks; community-based





tourism (homestays, village tours, storytelling experiences; small-scale craft markets.

Mining

- Exploit Tshixwadza's strategic location along the D3695 from the R523 to attract logistics, industrial and commercial investments.
- Promote stone crushing industries, small scale mining as part of Tshixwadza's industrial development in line with NEMA regulations.
- Mining opportunities include: artisanal and small-scale mining (extraction of sand, gravel, clay, or stone for local construction); limited mineral extraction (through available deposits); value-adding activities (brick-making from clay/mud or processing building materials, which can support local economic development).

Infrastructure

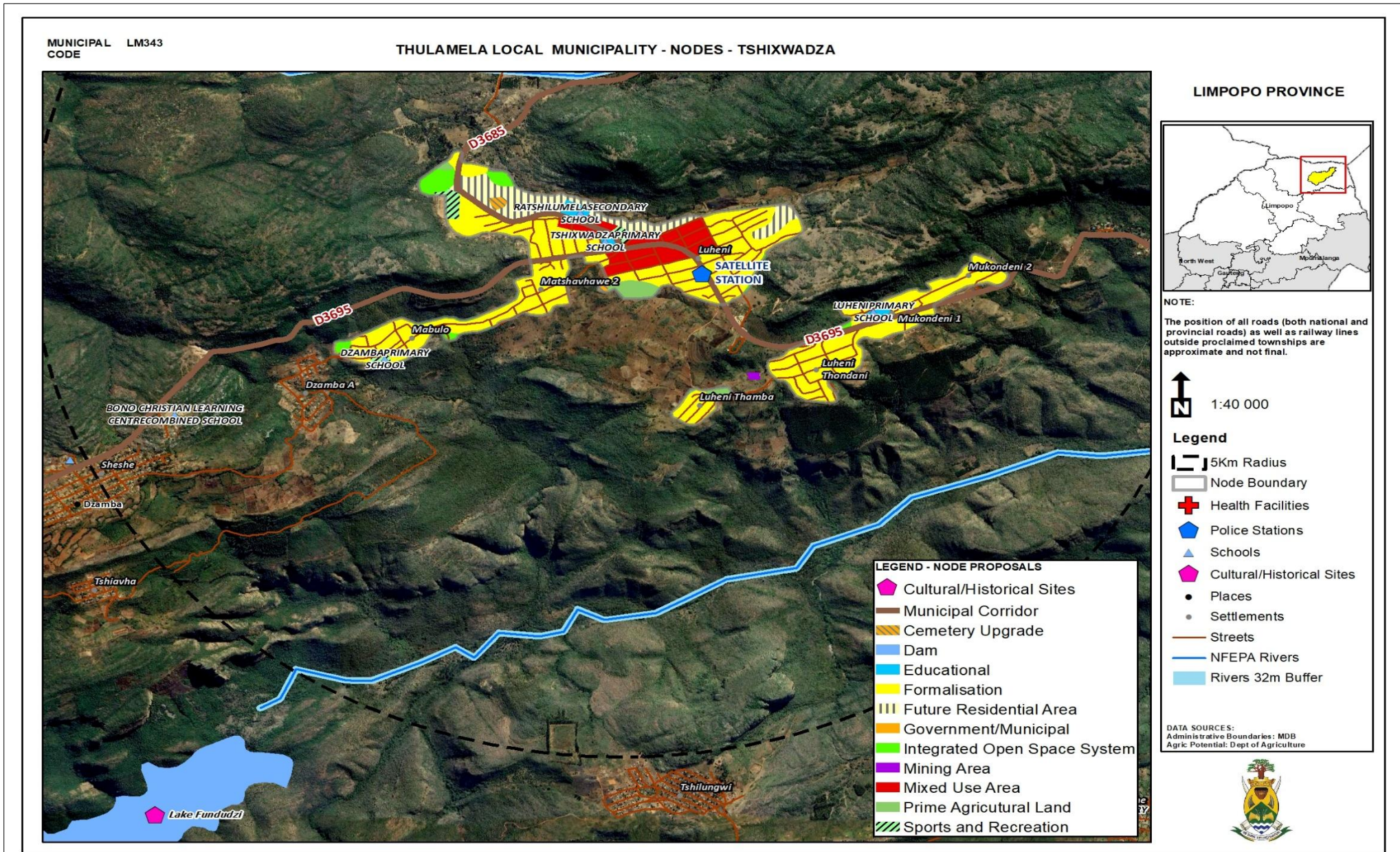
- Invest in the provision, upgrading and maintenance of bulk infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity, stormwater).
- Infrastructure opportunities include: expansion and upgrading of water supply systems (boreholes, communal standpipes, and piped networks); sanitation infrastructure can be improved through ventilated pit latrines, eco-sanitation systems, and, where feasible, simplified sewer networks); enhance road and transport infrastructure (gravel road upgrades such as D3685, D3695); pedestrian pathways; electricity provision {grid extension, renewable energy solutions (solar

power), can improve living conditions and support small businesses}; stormwater drainage systems to reduce flooding; waste management services (collection points, recycling initiatives); social infrastructure (schools, clinics, community hall/MPCC, parks/public open spaces).





Map 50: Tshixwadza Local Service Centre





4.6.9 Makuya Local Service Centre

The Makuya Local Service Centre located in the far eastern parts of the municipality and is connected to the broader municipal area through the P277/1 route.

Makuya serves several surrounding rural villages, including Khavhambe, Mutshikilini, Domboni and Lamvi, which depend on the node for access to social facilities, local retail activities and administrative services. The presence of community facilities such as schools and government offices further reinforce the role of the node as a local service centre for surrounding communities.

The node also benefits from its proximity to the Makuya Nature Reserve located to the east, which presents opportunities for tourism-related economic activities and environmental conservation.

Within the broader spatial structure of the municipality, Makuya therefore plays a strategic role in supporting rural communities in the eastern parts of Thulamela while also providing access to services and economic opportunities.

4.6.9.1 Development Focus

Development within the Makuya Local Service Centre should focus on strengthening the node as an eastern rural service centre while supporting corridor-based economic activity and environmentally responsible land use.

Residential development should prioritise the formalisation, securing land tenure and improving access to essential infrastructure improved economic infrastructure, such as internal streets and a stable water supply. Future residential expansion should be encouraged within areas highlighted for

future residential development to ensure orderly growth and prevent uncontrolled settlement expansion into environmentally sensitive areas or agricultural land.

Similarly, densification efforts should be encouraged on the area highlighted for residential densification to reduce the sprawl and undesired expansion of residential development, which could make it difficult for the provision of necessary socioeconomic infrastructure for fragmented settlements.

Mixed-use development should be encouraged along the P277/1 corridor, particularly along the highlighted mixed - use area having the Makuya Police Station and Makuya Secondary School, where the highest economic potential within the node has been identified. Development within this corridor should promote the clustering of commercial activities, informal trading, social facilities and service-related businesses that can serve both local residents and through traffic.

Environmental protection must also remain a key development consideration within the node. Areas with conservation value, particularly floodlines, rivers and sensitive ecological systems, should be protected from development encroachment and form part of the integrated open space system.

Prime agricultural land surrounding the node should be preserved and optimally utilised to support both subsistence and small-scale farming activities that contribute to local food security and livelihoods of the residents, and they should be protected from potential encroachment.





Gunyani, Musunda, Domboni, Muhotoni, Maholoni, Gondeni, Vhurivhuri, Halambani are villages earmarked for Rural Restructuring

4.6.9.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Makuya Local Service Centre is to develop a well-structured rural node that supports surrounding villages through improved infrastructure, strengthened local economic activities and sustainable land use management.

Future growth within the node should focus on strengthening the existing settlements while improving infrastructure and service delivery, limiting the residential sprawl or expansion. Residential development should be guided by formalisation programmes and carefully managed expansion within designated future residential areas.

In the short term (0–5 years), development priorities should focus on settlement formalisation, upgrading of engineering infrastructure and strengthening local service provision within the node, together with densifying development with then identified existing area.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development should focus on strengthening mixed-use economic activities along the P277/1 corridor while improving connectivity between surrounding villages and the Makuya service centre.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should evolve into a stable rural service centre that supports surrounding settlements, promotes tourism opportunities linked to the nearby Makuya Nature Reserve and strengthens regional accessibility within the eastern parts of TLM.

4.6.9.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

The development of a mixed-use economic activity corridor along the P277/1 route within the designated mixed-use area, in order to consolidate commercial activities and support small businesses.

Upgrading road infrastructure, particularly routes used for bus and taxi transport to supporting settlements, should be prioritised to improve accessibility and strengthen the integration between surrounding villages and the Makuya service centre.

Infrastructure improvements related to water supply and sanitation provision will also be essential to support sustainable residential and economic development.

Environmental protection initiatives should be implemented to conserve sensitive ecological areas and river systems, while promoting sustainable agricultural practices within surrounding farming areas.

In addition, tourism-related initiatives linked to the nearby Makuya Nature Reserve should be explored in order to create local economic opportunities and strengthen the node's role within the eastern tourism landscape of Thulamela Municipality.

4.6.9.4 Proposed Development Objectives

- Identify and upgrade informal settlements within the node.
- Invest in the upgrading and maintenance of ageing bulk infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity, stormwater), particularly in rural and underserved areas.



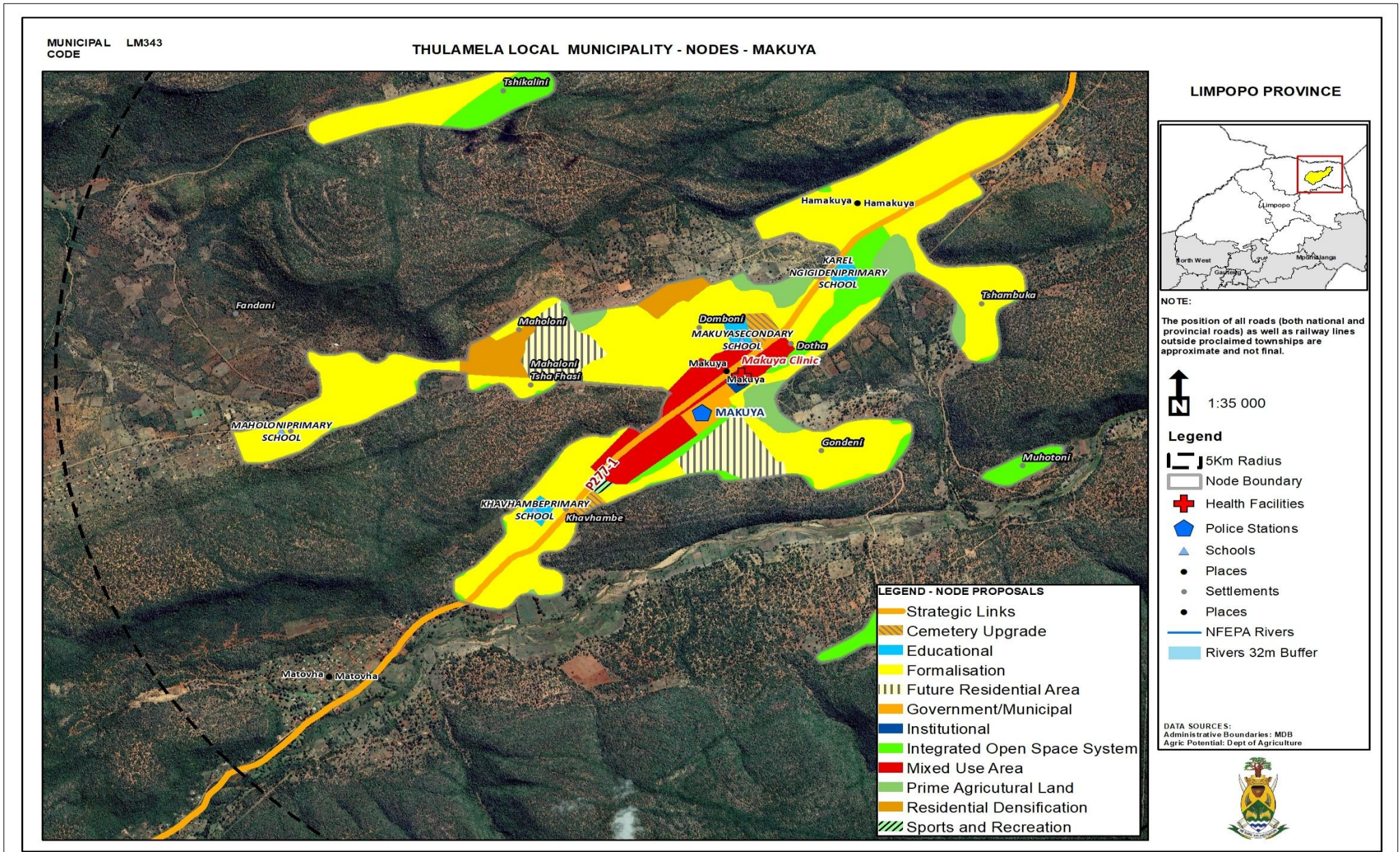


- Exploit Ha-Makuya's strategic location along the P277/1 to attract logistics, industrial and commercial investments.
- Promote stone crushing industries in surrounding rural areas to diversify the economy and create local and regional value chains in terms of industrial development.
- Formalise informal trade by providing demarcated trading zones, infrastructure and support services in key areas or business areas within rural areas.
- Safeguard and sustainably utilise fertile agricultural areas
- Develop mixed-income housing within the Ha-Makuya rural development edge, close to jobs and services, to support inclusion and limit the growth of informal settlements.
- Protect water catchment areas such as rivers, wetlands, and biodiversity corridors from encroachment and pollution.





Map 51: Makuya Local Service Centre





4.6.10 Makhuvha/Tshilivho (Potential Developmental Node / Priority Investment Area)

The Makhuvha / Tshilivho area is identified as a Potential Developmental Node and Priority Investment Area within the spatial structure of TLM. The area holds significant potential to evolve into a strategic rural development node due to its favourable geographic location, strong agricultural base, and proximity to the municipal economic hub of Thohoyandou.

Makhuvha and Tshilivho are surrounded by a number of rural settlements that rely heavily on Thohoyandou for employment, services and economic opportunities. The identification of this area as a potential development node is therefore intended to promote decentralised development that can reduce development pressure on Thohoyandou while improving service access and economic opportunities for surrounding rural communities.

The presence of fertile agricultural land and nearby educational institutions such as Madzivhandila Agricultural College further strengthens the strategic importance of the area as a potential agricultural development and agribusiness support centre.

In addition, the node's proximity to cultural heritage sites and tourism destinations such as the Mphaphuli Cycad Nature Reserve, Kruger National Park and other heritage areas within the municipality presents opportunities for tourism-related economic activities.

Within the broader municipal settlement hierarchy, Makhuvha / Tshilivho therefore functions as an emerging development node that has the potential to support rural economic development, strengthen agricultural value chains

and improve the spatial balance between urban and rural areas within Thulamela Municipality.

4.6.10.1 Development Focus

Development within the Makhuvha / Tshilivho Potential Developmental Node should focus on establishing the area as a rural economic growth point that supports agricultural development, agro-processing activities and community-based tourism.

Agricultural development should be prioritised due to the fertile agricultural land surrounding the area. Opportunities should be explored to support small-scale farmers through improved access to markets, agricultural support services, storage facilities and agro-processing infrastructure. These initiatives can contribute to the development of a local agribusiness hub that supports food security, job creation and rural economic diversification.

Mixed-use development should also be encouraged within identified activity areas in order to support small-scale commercial activities, local retail services and community facilities that serve surrounding rural settlements.

Tourism development opportunities should be explored through the promotion of cultural heritage sites and eco-tourism linkages to nearby destinations such as the Mphaphuli Cycad Nature Reserve, Kruger National Park and other heritage attractions within the municipality. Community-based tourism initiatives such as cultural markets, homestays and guided heritage tours could provide additional income opportunities for local communities.





Development should also prioritise the provision of essential infrastructure and services, including road upgrades, water supply, sanitation and electricity in order to support sustainable settlement growth and economic development.

4.6.10.2 Future Growth Direction and Spatial Vision

The long-term spatial vision for the Makhuvha / Tshilivho Potential Developmental Node is to develop a well-planned rural development hub that strengthens agricultural production, supports agro-processing activities and promotes tourism opportunities while improving access to services for surrounding rural communities.

Future development should focus on compact and service-oriented growth that integrates residential areas, local commercial activities and public facilities within well-planned development zones. Spatial planning tools such as zoning, precinct plans and growth management strategies should guide development in order to prevent uncontrolled settlement expansion and ensure sustainable land use patterns.

In the short term (0–5 years), development priorities should focus on infrastructure investment, particularly improvements to road connectivity between Makhuvha / Tshilivho and Thohoyandou, as well as strengthening agricultural support initiatives and small-scale local economic activities.

In the medium term (5–10 years), development should focus on expanding agricultural value chains through agro-processing facilities, improving market access for local farmers and promoting community-based tourism initiatives linked to nearby heritage and eco-tourism destinations.

In the long term (10–20 years), the node should evolve into a vibrant rural development hub that supports agricultural innovation, local enterprise development and tourism while improving socio-economic conditions for surrounding rural communities.

4.6.10.3 Key Projects and Strategic Interventions

Several strategic projects and interventions are proposed to support the development of the Makhuvha / Tshilivho Potential Developmental Node.

One of the key initiatives is the development of agricultural support and agro-processing facilities that can assist small-scale farmers with value addition, storage, packaging and market access.

Strengthening linkages with Madzivhandila Agricultural College should also be explored in order to support agricultural training, research and innovation that can benefit local farming communities.

Infrastructure investment will be critical for unlocking development potential in the area. Upgrading road connections between Makhuvha / Tshilivho and Thohoyandou should be prioritised to improve mobility, facilitate the movement of agricultural goods and strengthen economic linkages with the municipal economic hub.

Tourism development initiatives linked to nearby heritage and eco-tourism destinations, including Mphaphuli Cycad Nature Reserve, Kruger National Park, should also be promoted in order to create additional livelihood opportunities for local communities.





Additional projects may include the development of community facilities such as education institutions, healthcare services and local administrative offices that can support the surrounding rural population.

Through coordinated investment in economic infrastructure, agricultural development and community-led initiatives, the Makhuvha / Tshilivho area has the potential to become an important rural development hub that contributes to spatial equity, local economic growth and sustainable settlement development within TLM.

4.6.10.4 Proposed Development Objectives

- Identify and upgrade informal settlements within the node.
- Invest in the provision and maintenance of bulk infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity, stormwater), and underserved areas.
- Exploit Makhuvha Tshilivho strategic location along the R524 and the D3756 to attract logistics, industrial, tourism and commercial investments.
- Formalise informal trade by providing demarcated trading zones, infrastructure and support services in key areas or business areas within rural areas.
- Safeguard and sustainably utilise fertile agricultural areas
- Develop mixed-income housing within the Makhuvha Tshililo rural development edge, close to jobs and services,
- Protect water catchment areas such as Nandoni Dam, rivers, wetlands, and biodiversity corridors from encroachment and pollution.

- Compliance and Enforcement of TLM SPLUM By-Laws, 2016, in regulating conflicting land uses

4.6.10.5 Special Tourism and Economic Zone (STEZ)

A Special Tourism and Economic Zone (STEZ) is an area within TLM that is proposed to be developed and managed with the goal of promoting tourism, investment, and economic growth through special policies and incentives. Special Economic Zone (SEZ) are geographically designated areas of a country set aside for specifically targeted economic activities, they focus on trade, investment, and industry while Tourism Zone is a designated geographical area, which is rich in natural, cultural or historical features that attract people, it focuses on attracting domestic and international tourists.

Therefore, a special Tourism and Economic Zone is then identified in this TLM SDF Review as a hybrid zone that promotes both tourism development and economic activities like hospitality, retail, entertainment, and transport. The Tshilivho/Makhuvha Node functions as a service and economic node with a mixed-use character, serving surrounding settlements through the provision of:

- Social services (schools, clinics)
- Economic opportunities
- Institutional and educational facilities
- Tourism and recreation assets

Its designation as a Special Tourism and Economic Zone reflects its potential to act as a local growth pole, supporting both settlement consolidation and economic diversification.





The node exhibits a concentrated mixed-use pattern, particularly along the R524 corridor, where commercial, institutional, and higher-intensity land uses are encouraged. This spatial structuring:

- Supports corridor-based development
- Enhances accessibility to services
- Reinforces spatial efficiency by reducing travel distances

The presence of commercial farms and economic activity zones within and adjacent to the node strengthens linkages between rural production, local markets, and service centres.

Tourism intensification areas are strategically located in proximity to:

- Nandoni Dam
- Open space systems and river corridors
- Cultural and heritage sites

These areas are intended to support low to medium impact tourism development, including recreation, leisure, accommodation, and cultural tourism, while maintaining environmental integrity.

The spatial framework incorporates a Municipal Open Space System (MOSS), particularly along river corridors and dam adjacent areas. This system:

- Protects environmentally sensitive land
- Supports ecosystem services
- Provides opportunities for recreation and tourism
- Acts as a buffer between intensive land uses and natural assets.

The spatial framework identifies areas for settlement formalisation and consolidation, responding to existing development patterns. This approach:

- Reduces fragmented settlement expansion
- Improves service delivery efficiency
- Supports incremental upgrading within defined edges (urban and rural).

Settlement growth is directed away from environmentally sensitive areas and prime agricultural land, in line with SPLUMA and SDF under Review objectives. The spatial framework promotes a balanced integration of economic development, tourism, settlement consolidation, and environmental protection.

The node supports SPLUMA-aligned outcomes by:

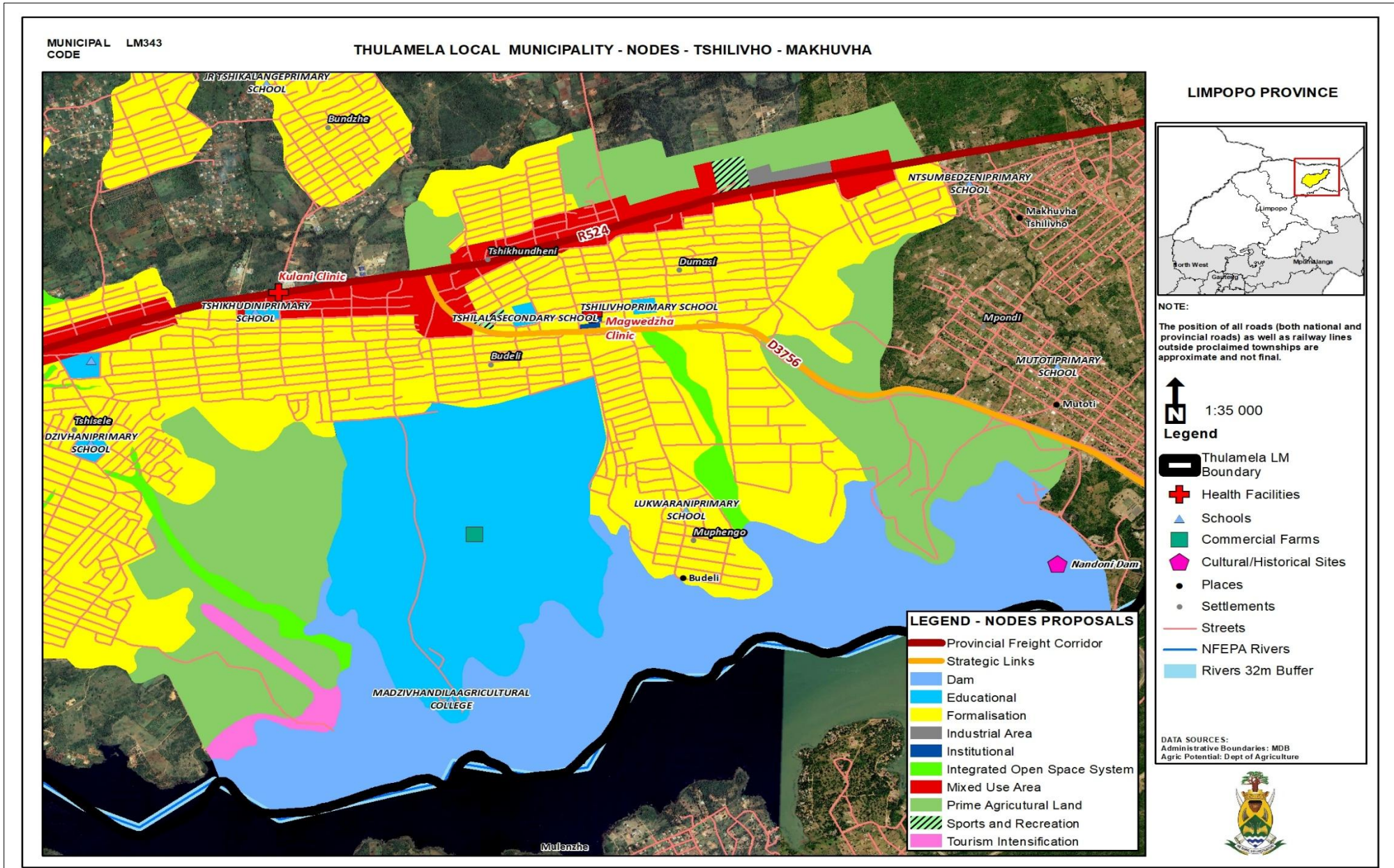
- Encouraging compact and efficient development
- Protecting agricultural and environmental resources
- Strengthening local economic development
- Improving access to services and opportunities

Effective implementation will require strong development control, coordinated infrastructure investment, and ongoing collaboration with Traditional Authorities and sector departments. If managed appropriately, the node has the potential to significantly contribute to inclusive growth and spatial restructuring within the municipality.





Map 52: Tshilivho/Makhuvha





4.6.11 Special Tourism and Agricultural Zone (STAZ)

A Special Tourism and Agricultural Zone (STAZ) is a designated area created to promote both tourism and agricultural development in a coordinated way, with the aim of linking agriculture and tourism, two key economic sectors within TLM, so that local farming communities benefit directly from tourism, and tourists experience authentic rural and agri-based attractions. Tourism activities, such as farm visits, eco-tourism, cultural experiences and so forth are combined with Agricultural production such as farming, food processing, local crafts, etc.

The STAZ is also proposed to operate under special policies, incentives, and infrastructure plans to encourage and strengthen investments, local participation, and sustainable development. Therefore, STAZ for the purposes of this TLM SDF Review will be an area earmarked for promoting both tourism and agriculture through special incentives, integrated infrastructure, and sustainable community-based development to strengthen the rural economy within TLM.

The purpose of the STAZ is to promote integrated rural development, safeguard high-potential agricultural land, and strategically leverage natural, cultural, and ecological assets for sustainable tourism development.

The STAZ are structured to function as multi-functional rural landscapes, where agriculture remains the primary land use, complemented by tourism intensification in strategically selected areas.

The zoning framework reflects:

- Extensive agricultural areas forming the dominant land use.
- Discrete tourism intensification nodes, located in areas of high environmental, cultural, and scenic value.
- Irrigation schemes and water resources supporting agricultural productivity and tourism viability.

This spatial approach supports SPLUMA's principle of spatial efficiency, by consolidating development and preventing fragmented land use patterns.

Tourism intensification areas within Zone 1 are clearly delineated and spatially contained, ensuring:

- Protection of surrounding agricultural land
- Conservation of ecologically sensitive landscapes
- Prevention of unstructured tourism development

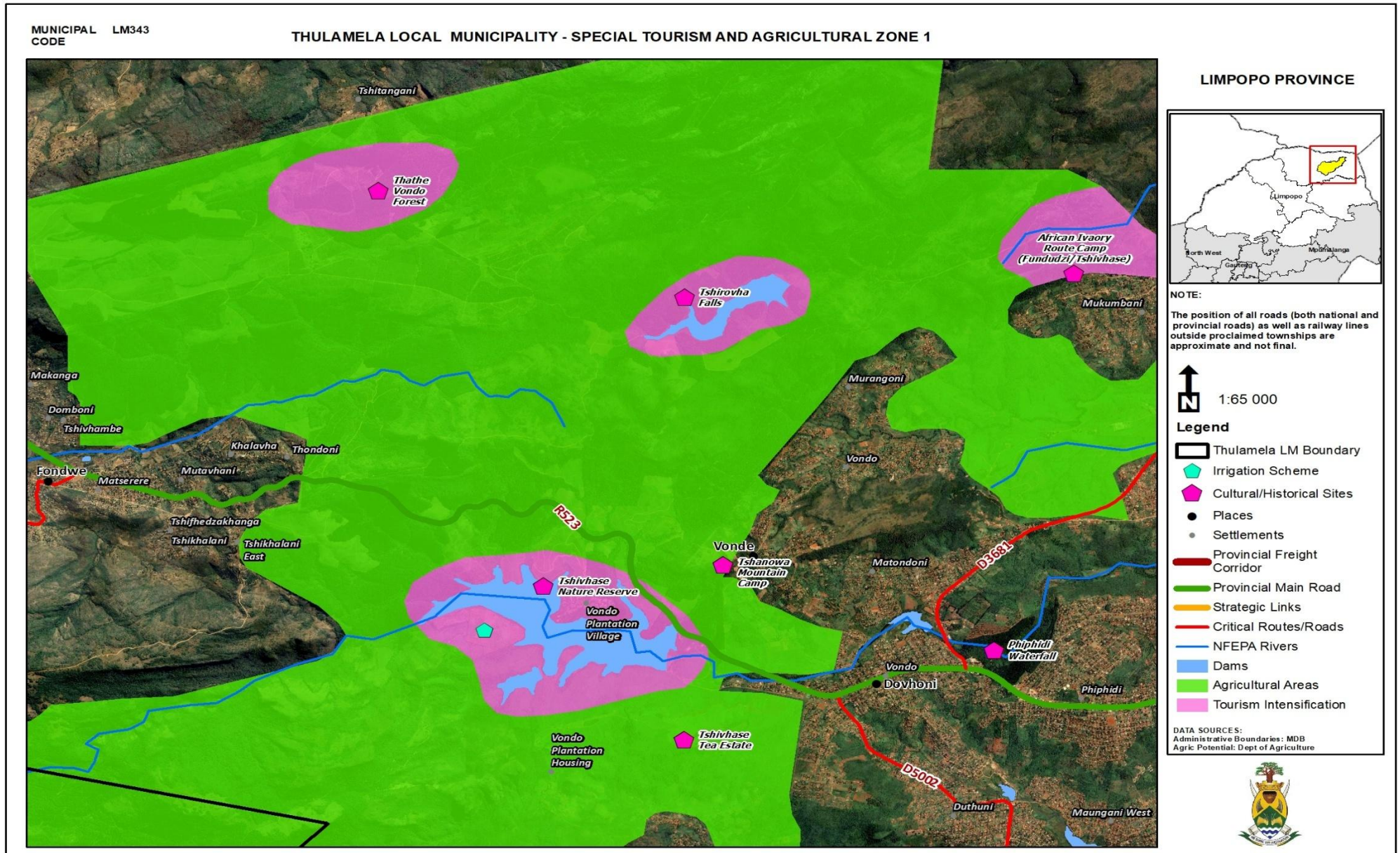
Agricultural land remains uninterrupted and dominant, reinforcing SPLUMA's requirement to safeguard productive land and support rural livelihoods.

The spatial alignment of tourism nodes with existing road infrastructure (R523, D3681, D5002) enhances accessibility while limiting pressure on settlement areas.





Map 53: Special Tourism and Agricultural Zone 1





Special Tourism and Agricultural Zone 2 is structured around:

- Commercial farming areas
- Irrigation schemes
- Major and supportive economic nodes
- Strategically located settlements along key transport corridors

This zone reflects a hierarchical rural economic structure, where settlements are supported by agricultural production, agro-processing, and market access. Tourism intensification areas are limited and peripheral, ensuring tourism development does not undermine agricultural production or settlement stability. This approach aligns with SPLUMA's principles of spatial sustainability and spatial resilience, particularly in rural and customary land contexts.

The spatial framework discourages land-use conversion from agriculture to residential or non-productive uses, consistent with national and provincial agricultural protection policies. Tourism intensification areas are located outside dense settlements and within areas of natural significance, supporting eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and nature-based accommodation. This targeted approach supports local economic development while maintaining environmental integrity and service efficiency.

The spatial framework demonstrates strong alignment between land use and movement systems, including:

- Provincial freight corridors supporting agricultural logistics
- Strategic routes linking settlements, economic nodes, and tourism areas

- Protection of critical transport infrastructure from incompatible land uses

This integration supports SPLUMA's principle of spatial efficiency and enhances TLM economic competitiveness.

Key implementation considerations include:

- Effective application of the TLM Land Use Management Scheme (LUMS)
- Coordination with Traditional Authorities/Council in customary land areas
- Environmental management and development control in tourism zones
- Ongoing infrastructure maintenance and capacity planning.

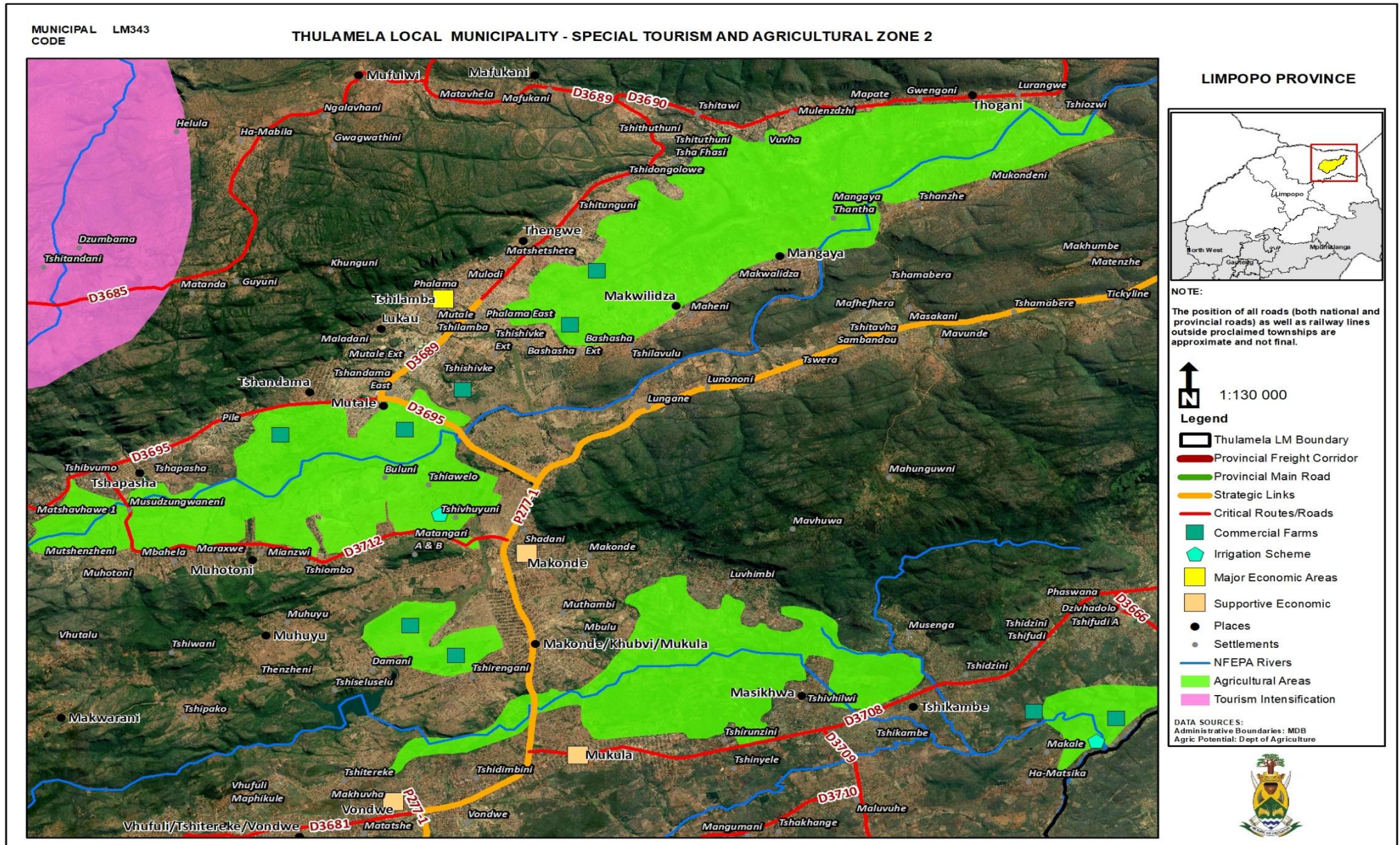
Failure to manage these aspects may result in incremental land-use change and loss of agricultural land.

The STAZ within TLM reflect a strategic and policy-aligned rural spatial planning approach. The framework successfully integrates agricultural protection, tourism development, and settlement structuring in accordance with SPLUMA





Map 54: Special Tourism and Agricultural Zone 2





4.7 CONCLUSION

The Spatial Proposals Phase for TLM translates the strategic intent of the SDF into a spatially explicit and implementable land use framework that responds to the municipality's rural character, environmental assets, and socio-economic development needs.

The proposed spatial framework reinforces the municipality's desired spatial form by promoting compact, efficient and sustainable development, while safeguarding high-value agricultural land and environmentally sensitive areas in line with the principles of the SPLUMA.

Central to the spatial proposals is the establishment of STEZ and STAZ, which function as multi-purpose rural landscapes where agricultural production remains the primary land use, complemented by strategically located tourism and economic development nodes. This approach supports rural livelihoods, enhances local economic development, and limits unplanned land use conversion and settlement sprawl.

The spatial proposals further strengthen the hierarchy of settlements and economic nodes, directing growth and investment towards areas with existing infrastructure, irrigation schemes, and access to provincial and strategic transport corridors. This spatial targeting improves service delivery efficiency, supports agro-processing and market access, and reinforces the municipality's role within the broader Limpopo provincial economy.

Tourism development is spatially structured around key natural, cultural, and heritage assets, with tourism intensification limited to clearly defined nodes.

This ensures that tourism development is environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and compatible with surrounding agricultural and settlement uses.

The proposed spatial framework also prioritises agricultural land protection, environmental management, and climate resilience, recognising the importance of water resources, river systems, and conservation areas to long-term rural sustainability.

Nevertheless, the Spatial Proposals Phase provides a coherent and policy-aligned spatial vision for TLM. It establishes a clear basis for land use management, infrastructure investment, and development control, while supporting inclusive rural development and economic diversification. Successful implementation will require strong alignment between the SDF, the LUMS, and coordinated engagement with Traditional Authorities/Councils and sector departments.





5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN & CAPITAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

The chapter focuses on the Implementation Plan and Capital Investment Framework, which serves as a critical bridge between the SDF's spatial vision and actionable outcomes. It links spatial priorities, such as compact urban form, environmental protection, and equitable development tools like capital budgeting, policies, and monitoring. The TLM SDF review looked at the following in this chapter:

- a) Capital investment framework
- b) Implementation policies and guidelines
- c) Land Use Management System guidelines
- d) Sector plan alignment
- e) Monitoring and evaluation framework
- f) Service Delivery & Budget Implementation Plan

5.1 CAPITAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

The Capital Investment Framework (CIF) serves as a strategic tool for the Municipality to operationalise the proposals and spatial concepts. Its primary purpose is to:

- Identify projects emerging from the spatial objectives and strategies;
- Allocate indicative costs and implementation timelines to the identified projects; and
- Determine appropriate funding sources and responsible implementation agents.

At this stage, the framework will be further refined and finalised after consultation with the TLM and stakeholders to ensure alignment with available resources, priorities, and implementation capacities.

The capital investment framework of TLM functions as both a financial management tool and a spatial development instrument. Guided by the MFMA, MSA, and SPLUMA, capital budgeting must align with the TLM IDP and SDF. In theory, capital expenditure should promote spatial transformation by directing investment toward designated growth nodes, strengthening development corridors, improving infrastructure efficiency, and supporting long-term restructuring goals such as densification and compact settlement patterns. In TLMs case, this includes reinforcing Thohoyandou as the primary urban node while extending services to surrounding rural settlements.

However, TLM's predominantly rural and dispersed settlement pattern presents significant planning and financial challenges. Scattered villages, low-density development, and historical infrastructure backlogs increase the cost-of-service provision and reduce economies of scale. As a result, a large portion of the capital budget is directed toward basic infrastructure such as roads, stormwater systems, water, and sanitation rather than catalytic urban development projects. While this approach addresses urgent service delivery needs, it limits the municipality's ability to use capital expenditure as a proactive spatial restructuring tool. Instead of driving compact and integrated urban growth, capital investment often follows existing settlement patterns, reinforcing spatial fragmentation.





Another key constraint is the municipality's heavy reliance on conditional grants, particularly the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). From a planning perspective, grant dependency restricts flexibility because funds are often earmarked for specific sectors, which can hinder integrated spatial investment. The timing and conditions of national transfers may not always align with long-term SDF priorities, resulting in incremental and sometimes fragmented infrastructure development rather than coordinated spatial transformation. Furthermore, limited own-revenue capacity affects the municipality's ability to fund large-scale strategic projects and to maintain infrastructure assets effectively, raising concerns about long-term sustainability.

Public participation processes and ward-based prioritisation also shape capital expenditure decisions. While community engagement strengthens democratic planning and ensures equitable distribution of resources, it can shift focus toward short-term and geographically dispersed service delivery demands rather than strategic nodal concentration. This creates a tension between promoting spatial efficiency and addressing widespread rural service backlogs. Overall, TLM's capital investment framework is compliant with legislative requirements and responsive to infrastructure needs, but its transformative potential is constrained by financial limitations, grant dependency, dispersed settlement patterns, and competing developmental priorities





Table 33: TLM Municipal Wide Projects Linked to the Development Principles

IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS	POLICY ALIGNMENT	TARGET PROGRAMME/PROJECT/ ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY,	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT	TIMELINES		
						SHORT	MED	LONG
Environmental Sustainability & Resource Management	Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA) National Forests Act 84 of 1998 (NFA) National Water Act 36 of 1998 (NWA) Thulamela SPLUM By-Laws, 2016 TLM Adaptation Plan 2024	CASP (Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme)	TLM	R30 000 000.00	TLM, CASP	x	x	
		Review the Environmental Management Framework	TLM	R2 300 000.00	TLM	x		
		Develop an integrated open space framework and a maintenance plan for the clearing of open spaces and parks.	TLM	R1 250 000.00	TLM and VDM	x	x	
		Protect and rehabilitate water catchments (especially in Damani, Mvuwe and Thathe Vondo Dam	TLM, VDM	R30 000 000.00	TLM, WSIG	x	x	x
Nodal Development & Urban-Rural Integration	NSDF 2022 CRDP (Comprehensive Rural Development Programme)	Upgrades of internal streets from gravel to paving (low traffic volume) and Asphalt coupled with stormwater within R293 towns (Shayandima, Makwarela,Tshilamba,Thohoyandou E,M,N,L K,R,Q)	TLM	R30 000 000.00	TLM, MIG	x	x	
		Accelerate delivery of basic infrastructure in rural areas, including piped water, electricity, ICT, and sanitation.	TLM	R250 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG, INEP, RIBG, TLM	x	x	
	NDP 2030 National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP)	Formalisation of identified settlements within the urban edge and the proposed extension of the urban edge in urban nodes & Data spatialization	COGHSTA, DHS, TLM	R40 000 000.00	TLM, COGHSTA, DHS	x	x	x
		Rural Restructuring in all identified settlements within the rural nodes & Data spatialization	COGHSTA, DHS, TLM	R20 000 000.00	TLM, COGHSTA, DHS	x	x	x
	SPLUMA 2013	Develop an integrated transport plan for all areas in the municipality (Road's rehabilitation especially in the rural areas, Areas affected by recent floods	SANRAL, RAL, DoT, TLM	R500 000 000.00	SANRAL, RAL, DoT, TLM	x	x	





IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS	POLICY ALIGNMENT	TARGET PROGRAMME/PROJECT/ ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY,	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT	TIMELINES		
						SHORT	MED	LONG
		Tshikunda, Dzimauli, Tswinga so on and forth. Provision of Tar or Paving on identified gravel roads)						
		Review and Develop Precinct Plans for all the Identified 14 SDAs (10 Nodes, Potential Developmental Node and 3 Priority Investment Areas)	TLM	R10 000 000.00	TLM	x	x	
		Develop a Local Spatial Development Plan (LSDF) for the P277/1 Strategic link	TLM	R800 000.00	TLM	x	x	
		Support eco-tourism and cultural tourism initiatives	LEDET, VDM, TLM	R 300 000.00	TLM, VDM, LEET	x	x	x
Infrastructure investment & connectivity	NSDF 2022 Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) 2020–2025	Upgrading of N1 to Willyspoort to Thohoyandou P27811	RAL	R5 000 000.00	RAL,	x	x	
		Upgrading of R524(P98/1) to ease traffic congestion	SANRAL	R20 000 000.00	SANRAL	x	x	x
		Upgrading of internal streets and lighting in Thohoyandou Industrial Area	RAL, TLM	R15 000 000.00	TLM, RAL	x	x	
		Conduct feasibility study on engineering infrastructure demand for each SDA (10 Nodes, Potential Developmental Node and 3 Priority Investment Areas)	TLM	R4 000 000.00	TLM	x		
		Rehabilitation of surface Roads and stormwater within R293 towns (Thohoyandou, Shayandima, Makwarela Tshilamba, Tshitereke, Tshifulanani)	TLM, MIG	R15 000 000.00	TLM, MIG	x	x	
		Upgrades of internal streets from gravel to paving (low traffic volume) and Asphalt coupled with stormwater within R293 towns (Thohoyandou E,M,N,L K,R,Q, Shayandima, Makwarela and Tshilamba townships)	TLM	R30 000 000.00	TLM, MIG	x	x	
		Develop an infrastructure implementation plan	TLM, VDM	R1 500 000.00	TLM, VDM	x	x	
Economic Development & Industrial Diversification	NSDF 2022	Promote compact development in SDAs (10 Nodes, Potential Developmental Node and 3 Priority Investment Areas) with reference to Policy and Planning phases	TLM	R800 000.00	TLM	x	x	





IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS	POLICY ALIGNMENT	TARGET PROGRAMME/PROJECT/ ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY,	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT	TIMELINES		
						SHORT	MED	LONG
	Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) 2020–2025	Develop a municipal-wide ICT master plan	TLM, DCDT	R 3 000 000.00	TLM, DCDT	x	x	
		Investigate and Operationalise landfill operations municipal-wide	TLM	R2 000 000.00	TLM, MIG	x	x	
		Prepare Precinct Plans and regeneration plans of CBDs to address urban decay and improve living conditions in Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshilamba	TLM	R1 800 000.00	TLM	x		
		Identify and address infrastructure backlogs (Economic infrastructure, Housing)	TLM	R600 000.00	TLM, MIG, RBIG, WSIG, HSDG	x		
		Identify and support strategic urban to rural economic activity zones (industrial, tourism, and agricultural)	TLM	R1 200 000.00	TLM	x	x	
		Feasibility Study for-and-Promotion of non-motorised transport (NMT) infrastructure (sidewalks, cycle lanes, donkey cart lanes, etc.) to create pedestrian-friendly environments especially in urban areas of Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Tshilamba.	TLM	R3 000 000.00	TLM, MIG	x	x	
Human Settlement Development	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 Thulamela Housing Sector Plan Integrated Urban Development Framework 2016	Review of Municipal-wide housing sector plan	TLM, HDA, COGHSTA	R1 800 000.00	TLM, HDA, COGHSTA	x	x	
Local Economic Development	Local economic development strategy	Conduct awareness campaigns and workshops for Traditional Councils for the protection of prime agricultural land and effective land use management systems	TLM	Operational	TLM	x	x	





IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS	POLICY ALIGNMENT	TARGET PROGRAMME/PROJECT/ ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY,	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT	TIMELINES		
						SHORT	MED	LONG
		Review of existing municipal Local Economic Development strategy	TLM	R1 200 000.00	TLM	x	x	
		Revitalization of Thohoyandou IA and Regulating of emerging industrial areas (IA)/Hardware's within the identified nodes	TLM, LEDET, DTI, IDC	R4 200 000.00	TLM, LEDET, DTI, IDC	x	x	x
Collaborative Planning & Knowledge Partnerships	Thulamela Vision 2030	Promote compact development in SDAs (10 Nodes, Potential Developmental Node and 3 Priority Investment Areas) with reference to Policy and Planning phases	TLM, UNIVEN, PRIVATE SECTOR	R800 000.00	TLM, UNIVEN, PRIVATE SECTOR	x	x	

Table 34: Thohoyandou–Sibasa Provincial Urban Node

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Thohoyandou–Sibasa	Provincial urban node	Develop a programme to formalise informal settlements, less formal townships and Economic infrastructure provision.	R5 000 000.00	DHS, LIM, COGTA, HDA, TLM
		Review of the Sibasa Precinct Plan	R400 000.00	TLM
		Tshiulungoma Ring Road	R20 000 000.00	MIG, TLM (Technical Services)
		Thohoyandou J Street phase 2	R20 000 000.00	MIG, TLM (Technical Services)
		Review of the Thohoyandou Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM



NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
		Review/Develop a CBD Urban Restructuring and Renewal Strategy for Thohoyandou and Sibasa	R600 000.00	DCoG, TLM, Private Sector
		AC pipe replacement in Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Residential Area, CBD, Industrial area	R90 000 000.00	WSIG
		Upgrading and maintenance of Shayandima internal streets	R30 000 000.00	MIG, TLM (Technical Services)
		Undertake smart readiness assessment for the Urban Development Zone	R400 000,00	TLM

Table 35: Tshilamba Regional Development Anchor

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Tshilamba	Tshilamba Regional Anchor	Develop a programme to formalise informal settlements, less formal townships, Rural restructuring and economic infrastructure provision	R5 000 000.00	Department of Human Settlements/LIM COGTA/HDA/TLM
		Finalise the feasibility study for the locality and size of a Regional Cemetery	R1 200 000.00	TLM



NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
		Review of the Tshilamba Precinct Plan	R600 000.00	TLM
		Develop a CBD Urban Restructuring and Renewal Strategy	R400 000.00	TLM
		Bulk Water and Sanitation upgrades	R30 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Roads and stormwater upgrading	R40 000 000.00	MIG
		Undertake smart readiness assessment for the Urban Development Zone	R400 000.00	TLM
		Waste Transfer Station Construction	R2 000 000.00	Waste Management Programme, MIG, TLM
		Rural restructuring on identified villages and economic infrastructure provision	R2 500 000.00	COGHSTA, DHS, TLM
		Promote and regulate Small-scale mining	R 500 000.00	TLM

Table 36: Makonde/Khubvi/Mukula Regional Development Anchor

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
		Upgrading of Mukula – Mhinga road	R20 000 000.00	RAL
		Upgrading of Tshivhilwi – Muraga	R6 000 000.00	RAL



NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Makonde/Khubvi/Mukula	Regional Development Anchor	Development of precinct plan	R800 000.00	TLM
		Upgrading of strategic ring road within the nodal point	R5 000 000.00	TLM
		Develop Water and Sanitation sector plans for the WSA	R2 000 000.00	TLM, VDM
		Bulk water and sanitation provision & upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Roads and stormwater upgrades	R20 000 000.00	RAL, MIG
		Promote Agriculture and Agro-Processing	R3 000 000.00	TLM, DLRRD, LDARD
		Revitalise Irrigation Schemes	R1 500 000.00	TLM, DLRRD, LDARD
		Promote Tourism and Eco-Tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM, VDM, PPP
		Rural restructuring in identified villages and economic infrastructure provision	R2 500 000.00	TLM, COGHSTA, DHS
		Promote and regulate Small-scale mining	R 500 000.00	TLM



Table 37: Tshisaulu/Lwamondo Local Service Centre

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Lwamondo/Tshisaulu	Local Service Centre	Tshifulanani-Duthuni Road	5 000 000.00	RAL
		Review of the Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM
		Bulk water and sanitation provision and upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Roads and stormwater provision and upgrading	R20 000 000.00	RAL, MIG
		Promote Tourism and Eco-Tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM
		Agricultural support to emerging farmers and Revitalise Irrigation Schemes	R1 500 000.00	DLRRD, LDARD
		Develop and Promote Agro-Processing plants	R3 000 000.00	DLRRD, LDARD
		Rural restructuring in identified villages and economic infrastructure provision	R2 500 000.00	TLM, COGHSTA, DHS
		Upgrading of strategic ring road within the nodal point	R5 000 000.00	TLM
		Promote and regulate Small-scale mining	R 500 000.00	TLM



Table 38: Tshaulu/Gaba/Tshifudi Local Service Centre

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Tshaulu, Gaba, Tshifudi	Local Service Centre	Maintenance of bridge PN 180 on Road D 3753-010 Dzondo	R15 000 000.00	TLM, RAL
		Rural Restructuring of identified villages, and economic infrastructure provision	R5 000 000.000	DHS/COGHSTA/HDA/TLM
		Upgrading of strategic ring road within the node	R5 000 000.00	RAL, DoT, TLM
		Review of the Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM
		Develop Water and Sanitation sector plans for the WSA	R600 000.00	TLM, VDM
		Bulk water and sanitation provision and upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Roads and stormwater upgrading	R20 000 000.00	RAL, MIG
		Promote and support Agriculture including agro-processing	R3 000 000.00	TLM, DLRRD, DLARD
		Promote and support tourism and eco-tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM, VDM, PPP



NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
		Upgrading and Provision of Sewer Network	R 3 000 000.00	TLM, MIG
		Promote and regulate Small-scale mining	R 500 000.00	TLM

Table 39: Tshitereke/Vhufuli/Vondwe Local Service Centre

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Tshitereke/Vhufuli/Vondwe	Local service point	Rural restructuring of identified villages and economic infrastructure provision	R5 000 000.00	DHS/ COGHSTA/HDA/TLM
		Review of the Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM
		Bulk water and sanitation provision and upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Promote and support Agriculture, including agro-processing	R3 000 000.00	TLM, DLRRD, LDARD



NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
		Promote and support tourism and eco-tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM, VDM, PPP
		Upgrading of strategic ring road within the node	R5 000 000.00	RAL, DoT, TLM
		Promote and regulate Small-scale mining	R500 000.00	TLM
		Review of the Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM

Table 40: Tshikombani Local Service Centre

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
		Upgrading of R523 road to accommodate the growing congestion	R20 000 000.00	RAL, TLM
		Upgrading of the strategic ring road within the node	R5 000 000.00	RAL, DoT, TLM
		Review of the Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM



NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Tshikombani	Local Service Centre	Bulk water and sanitation provision and upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Roads and stormwater upgrading	R20 000 000.00	RAL, MIG
		Promote and support tourism and eco-tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM, VDM, PPP
		Promote and regulate Small-scale mining (Stone Crushing)	R2 000 000.00	LEDET, TLM, COGTA
		Promote and support Agriculture, including agro-processing	R3 000 000.00	TLM, DLRRD, LDARD
		Rural restructuring of identified villages and economic infrastructure provision	R5 000 000.00	DHS/ COGHSTA/HDA/TLM

Table 41: Makuya Local Service Centre

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
		Upgrading of strategic ring road within the node	R5 000 000.00	INEP, TLM





NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Ha-Makuya	Local Service Centre	Bulk water and sanitation provision and upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Promote and support Agriculture including agro-processing	R3 000 000.00	TLM, DLRRD
		Promote and support tourism and eco-tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM, VDM, PPP
		Promote and regulate small scale mining (inclusive of Stone Crushing)	R2 000 000.00	LEDET, TLM, COGTA
		Rural restructuring of identified villages and economic infrastructure provision	R5 000 000.00	DHS/ COGHSTA/HDA/TLM
		Review of the Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM
		Roads and stormwater upgrading	R20 000 000.00	RAL, MIG



Table 42: Tshixwadza Local Service Centre

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Tshixwadza	Local Service Centre	Upgrading of critical ring road within the node	R5 000 000.00	TLM
		Review of the Precinct Plan	R800 000.00	TLM
		Development of Land Planning Programme Area Plan for Rambuda Traditional Council areas	R700 000	DLRRD
		Bulk water and sanitation provision and upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Roads and stormwater upgrading	R20 000 000.00	RAL, MIG
		Promote and support tourism and eco-tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM, VDM, PPP
		Promote and regulate small scale mining (including Stone Crushing)	R2 000 000.00	LEDET, TLM, COGTA
		Rural restructuring of identified villages and economic infrastructure provision	R5 000 000.00	DHS/ COGHSTA/HDA/TLM



Table 43: Makhuvha /Tshilivho /Nandoni Developmental Node

NODE/LINK/ZONE	NODE DESCRIPTION	PROJECTS	ESTIMATED COSTS	IMPLEMENTING AGENT
Makhuvha, Tshilivho	Potential Developmental Node (Priority Investment Areas)	Upgrading of strategic link road to tourism activity within Nandoni dam precinct	R5 000 000.00	TLM
		Develop the Precinct Plan for the area including Nandoni tourism node	R800 000.00	TLM
		Develop a feasibility study and business plan for the expansion of Madzivhandila Agricultural College, including a land use development framework for the educational precinct area to pro-actively plan for student accommodation and ancillary agricultural uses.	R700 000.00	LDARD, TLM, DLRRD
		Bulk water and sanitation provision and upgrades	R20 000 000.00	MIG, WSIG
		Promote and support Agriculture including agro-processing	R3 000 000.00	TLM, DLRRD
		Promote and support tourism and eco-tourism	R500 000.00	LEDET, TLM, VDM, PPP



Table 44: Projects from the Limpopo Department of Education

LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROJECTS			
PROJECT	SCHOOL	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT LEADER
Classrooms, Water & Sanitation	Mphaphuli Secondary School	Construct 35 new classrooms, Large Administration block, 2 x Multipurpose classrooms, Nutrition Centre, Septic tank, 55 enviroloo toilets for learners and 12 waterborne toilets for educators. Provide 40 parking bays (25 covered) and pave assembly area. Refurbish borehole and provide 100KL water storage tanks	IDT
Classrooms, Water and Sanitation	Mangaya Primary School	Construction Of 8 Classrooms, 2x Gr2 Facilities, Medium Administration Block, Nutrition Centre, Science Laboratory, Computer Laboratory, Gate House, Waterborne Ablutions (M2 X1 and F6 X1 with a Disabled Unit) and Various External Works at Mangaya Primary School, Mutala, Vhembe District.	ITRU/ Panel of contractors
Water and Sanitation	Tshifhumulo Primary School	Construct 1 waterborne seats and 1 urinals for male educators 2 waterborne seats and 1 paraplegic seat for female educators, 3 x waterborne seats and 1 seat paraplegic for Grade R, 3 x enviroloo seats and 3 urinals for boys, Septic tank, and steel palisade. Upgrade borehole and provide 30KL water storage tanks. Demolish 8 pit toilets Refurbish existing 8 enviroloo seats and allocate to girls	The Mvula Trust
Classrooms, Water & Sanitation	Lwamondo Secondary School	Reconfigure existing Admin block into a well-structured Admin block (offices, staffroom, sick bay, kitchenette etc). Refurbish 1 x 4, and 1 x 3 classroom blocks, 1 x 1 classroom blocks. Construct 22 classrooms. Demolish 16 classrooms	IDT
Classrooms, Water & Sanitation	Tswera Primary School (Relocate to New Site)	Construct 8 ordinary classrooms, 2 x Grade R facilities, 1 x Multipurpose classroom, 16 enviroloos, Steel Palisade fence, Drill and equip borehole.	IDT



Table 45: Projects from the Limpopo Department of Transport and Community

LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECTS		
PROJECT	ALLOCATED BUDGET	LEADER
Construction of Limpopo Traffic College Admin Block	65 million	Chief director
Construction of Limpopo Traffic College Classrooms	65 million	Chief director
Construction of Limpopo Traffic College Citchen and Canteen	48 million	Chief director
Thohoyandou K53	53 million	Chief director

Table 46: Projects from the Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts and Culture

LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE		
PROJECTS	ALLOCATED BUDGET	PROJECT LEADER
Construction of a new public library at Tshaulu	R12,654.002.44	DSAC
Construction of a New Public library at Khubvi	R24,000.00	DSAC

In a nutshell the following table indicates the identified challenges which are deemed critical for TLM and the catalytic projects identified which therefore seeks to mitigate and remedy this situation within the local municipality in order to can then improve the current status of TLM and therefore move towards the city status as most of the municipal documents percieve.

If these catalytic projects are therefore implemented, also putting into consideration the backlogs within the provision of economic infrastructure as an enabler for economic development. TLM will therefore start to attract local and foreign investments in their rural and urban spaces .





Table 47: Challenges Identified and Catalytic Projects responding to such Challenges

CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED	CATALYTIC PROJECTS RESPONDING TO SUCH CHALLENGES
Landlocked for urban expansion	Formalisation of identified settlements within the urban edge and the proposed extension of the urban edge in urban nodes & Data Spatialization (Municipal Wide project: Table 33).
Inadequate and unreliable water provision, which constrains settlement growth and economic activity	Accelerate delivery of basic infrastructure in rural areas, including piped water, electricity, ICT, and sanitation (Municipal Wide project: Table 33)
Inconsistent refuse collection	Investigate and Operationalise landfill operations Municipal-Wide (Municipal Wide project: Table 33).
Ageing and overburdened sanitation infrastructure, including frequent blockages and sludge overflows in Thohoyandou and Sibasa CBDs	Accelerate delivery of basic infrastructure in rural areas, including piped water, electricity, ICT, and sanitation (Municipal Wide project: Table 33).
Proliferation of informal backyard accommodation, particularly for students and CBD's workforce, is placing pressure on infrastructure and services.	Review of Municipal-Wide Housing Sector Plan (Municipal Wide project: Table 33).
Dilapidated buildings and urban decay within CBDs, undermining safety and economic vitality	Prepare Precinct Plans and Regeneration Plans of CBDs to address urban decay and improve living conditions in Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshilamba (Municipal Wide project Table 33).
Informal land allocation practices by Traditional authorities are leading to unplanned settlement growth and service inefficiencies	Conduct awareness campaigns and workshops for Traditional Councils for the protection of prime agricultural land and effective land use management systems (Municipal Wide project: Table 33).
Limited after-hours economic activity, with retail centres closing early, contributing to reduced street activity and higher crime levels	Prepare Precinct Plans and Regeneration Plans of CBDs to address urban decay and improve living conditions in Thohoyandou, Sibasa, Tshilamba (Municipal Wide project: Table 33).



Over and above that, TLM will need an estimated budget of around R1 025 550 000.00, over the next 10 years to can then implement these identified catalytic projects within the Municipal Wide Projects as highlighted in Table 33, from the implementor/ implemetating agent, whether in the form of grants or own funding.

Catalytic Projects packaging was done based on the following rationale that all the Municipal Wide Projects will be the projects TLM will have to prioritise for the next coming 5 to 10 years. Moreover, these are projects identified on the Short Term timeline (0 – 5yrs) and are the ones the local municipality will have to implement fistr, then followed by the the Medium Term timeline (5 – 10yrs) and lastly followed by the Long Term timeline (10yrs and beyond).

As per SPLUMA Section 21, the Capital Expenditure Framework needs to be mapped, and this was done together collectively on the Priority Projects Per Ward Map which is therefore identified as Map 7.





5.2 IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

5.2.1 Urban Edge Policy

This policy tackles uncontrolled urban development and urban sprawl in the key nodal areas such as in Thohoyandou, Sibasa and Tshilamba. An urban edge is a demarcated line, defined by a road, contour, natural physical elements which sets the limit for urban development. This is done to contain urban sprawl and protect assets, ensuring optimal utilization of services such as public transport. It has assisted in mitigating infrastructure strain (such as sewer infrastructure) from uncontrolled growth, promoted redevelopment within existing urban areas, and safeguards rural assets (e.g., high-potential agricultural land) in a municipality with diverse topography and biodiversity. It has assisted in guiding investments toward nodes like Thohoyandou, reducing illegal settlements and supporting the 2024/25 IDP's focus on service delivery in sprawl-prone areas, while enabling proactive amendments for housing demands.

Review Analysis & Recommendation

The Urban Edge Policy presents both strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, however, the strategy remains highly relevant and necessary. The following points outline the key highlights identified during the review:

- Distinct rural-urban difference (e.g., urban nodes permitting dwelling unit densities greater than 1 du/hectare), facilitated positive interfaces and aligns with Traditional Councils for rural management.

- Dependency on supporting mechanisms (e.g., densification policies) creates an integrated approach.
- Protects the existing high agricultural and environmental land by limiting outward sprawl.
- It has allowed for infrastructure investment allowing TLM to focus on development within the urban edge, which interns improves service delivery and efficiency reducing long term maintenance costs.
- The set boundary has not accounted for the changing demographic trends and market dynamics for growth, limiting to an extent some development in certain nodal points.

In understanding the analysis of the urban edge policy, its strengths and weaknesses, the following improvement points are highlighted to ensure the continued effectiveness and progressive refinement of the urban edge strategy:

-  Realign the Urban Edge to better accommodate nodal areas experiencing shifts in demographics and market dynamics such as Sibasa, Thohoyandou, Tshikombani, and Tshilamba. This realignment should reflect current growth trends, emerging economic activities, and evolving settlement patterns to ensure that development remains spatially balanced, inclusive, and sustainable.





5.2.2 Residential Densification Policy

The Residential Densification Policy defines *densification* as “the process whereby densities that is, the number of dwelling units per hectare increase in a planned and sustainable manner.” This policy direction was driven by the recognition that available land for residential development over the next twenty years is limited due to factors such as topography, agricultural land preservation, and biodiversity protection. The policy Aims to create compact settlements, protect environmentally sensitive land, optimize the use of existing infrastructure and resources, support efficient public transport systems, and improve the quality of life. This policy promoted practical measures such as constructing second dwellings, subdividing existing properties, and implementing higher-density infill developments. It provided guidelines such as mixed-use zones, major transportation corridors, and designated residential or economic zones.

Table 48: Density factors and their application according to the TLM SDF under Review

Density Category	Density Range (Student Accommodation)	Location
Lower	250 – 350 Rooms/ha	Towards urban edge / urban periphery
Medium	350 – 500 Rooms/ha	Within 1Km of major transport route

Density Category	Density Range (Student Accommodation)	Location
High	500 – 750 Rooms/ha	Within 100m of a major route in the urban core and the CBD's Mixed-Use areas

Density Category	Density Range (Residential Units / Buildings)	Location
Lower	250 – 350 du/ha	Towards urban edge / urban periphery
Medium	250 – 350 du/ha	Within 1Km of major transport route
High	250 – 350 du/ha	Within 100m of a major route in the urban core and the CBD's Mixed-Use areas

Review Analysis & Recommendation

The Residential Densification Policy presents both strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, however, the strategy remains highly relevant and necessary. The following points outline the key highlights identified during the review:



- Promotes a compact and efficient urban form, optimising the use of land, infrastructure and public transport systems. This is highly evident in nodes such as Thohoyandou.
- Enhanced housing diversity and affordability by encouraging a mix of housing types and price ranges (e.g., second dwellings), thereby increasing housing choice.
- Infrastructure capacity is a shortfall for the growth of densification in TLM. This has led to service delivery strain, increased maintenance demands, and infrastructure backlogs in certain localities.
- Undermined character of established areas, whereby in neighbourhoods, the absence of clear design, scale, and form-based guidelines enabled over-scaled developments that disrupted the existing residential character.

In understanding the analysis of the residential densification policy, its strengths and weaknesses, the following improvement points are highlighted to ensure the continued effectiveness and progressive refinement of the policy:

5.2.3 Infrastructure Policy

The Infrastructure Policy is grounded in Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution, which guarantees citizens' rights to water and sanitation. It requires municipalities to prioritize basic needs and promote development through the provision of Equitable, Accessible, Sustainable, and Efficient (EASE) services. The policy is structured around several key subsections:

- **Legislative Requirement:** *Obligations depend on available resources, equity principles, conservation imperatives, and local topography.*
- **Planning:** *Ensures integrated planning for urban growth, densification, backlog eradication, higher-level service provision, resource conservation, and appropriate sanitation technologies. Objectives include directing development toward identified economic nodes.*
- **Evaluation Criteria:** *Factors include water source availability, cost-effectiveness, and prevention of inefficient 'leapfrog' development.*
- **Institutional Arrangements:** *Stipulates bulk service provider agreements, recruitment and retention of skilled staff, and safeguards against political interference.*
- **Financial Arrangements:** *Encourages ring-fencing of funds and effective credit control to ensure sustainable service delivery.*

The policy aimed to provide and implement sustainable infrastructure services by structuring municipal administration and budgeting processes for EASE delivery, ensuring equitable, viable, and resource-conscious provision.

Review Analysis & Recommendation

The Infrastructure Policy presents both strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, however, the strategy remains highly relevant and necessary. The following points outline the key highlights identified during the review:

- Comprehensive structure which allowed for all critical aspects from planning to finance, with detailed objectives like systematic backlog





eradication and criteria to avoid cost-inefficient leapfrog development.

- Forward-Looking orientation which considers hierarchical nodes and regional economic sustainability, supporting long-term development planning.
- Resource dependency whereby development has to be on resource availability, which delayed service delivery in rural areas.
- Lacks integration of digital infrastructure (e.g., broadband), renewable energy, and climate-resilient solutions.

In understanding the analysis of the infrastructure policy, its strengths and weaknesses, the following improvement points are highlighted to ensure the continued effectiveness and progressive refinement of the policy:

- Include digital and resilient services (e.g., solar-backed water systems, broadband connectivity) aligned with the 2024/25 IDP energy and technology targets.
- Establish independent boards or committees to monitor service delivery and reduce the risk of political interference.
- Incorporate climate-adaptive planning, flood mitigation measures, and disaster risk management to future-proof infrastructure.

5.2.4 Subsidized Housing Policy

The Subsidized Housing policy defines subsidized housing as targeting households earning below R3,500 per month. Its core aim is to guide long-term placement of subsidized and gap housing in a way that creates compact, integrated, and viable communities, while protecting urban edges and promoting beneficiary well-being. The policy looked at ensuring the

prevention of informal settlements by linking housing to economic and social opportunities, maximize the use of existing infrastructure and municipal services, promote safe and socially cohesive neighbourhoods. It looked at the following:

- ✚ Objective: Identify suitable land for subsidized and gap housing that supports integrated settlement patterns, economic inclusion, and sustainable urban form.

Identification of Land:

- Contain sprawl: Sites “not be located adjacent to the urban edge.”
- Facilitate integration: Near economic opportunities and existing services.
- Viable options: Site size must support economic sustainability.
- Environmentally suited: Encourage sustainable development practices.
- Beneficiary well-being: Consider livelihoods, social support, and safety.

- ✚ General Guidelines:

Align with national and provincial standards, diversify housing typologies, provide optimal infrastructure and pre-paid services, and prioritize social and industrial/mining housing schemes.





Review Analysis & Recommendation

The Subsidized Housing Policy presents both strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, however, the strategy remains highly relevant and necessary. The following points outline the key highlights identified during the review

- Provides a comprehensive evaluation framework which guides site selection.
- Outlined practical measures such as pre-paid services and diversification of housing types help ensure financial sustainability and long-term viability.
- Provided policy accounts for livelihood strategies, social networks, and workforce needs, promoting social cohesion and economic inclusion.
- Relies on external national/provincial guidelines without specific local performance indicators or success measures.
- No mandatory provisions for flood-safe siting, climate resilience, or green infrastructure.
- Fails to address gender, disability, or other vulnerable groups, risking exclusion.

In understanding the analysis of the subsidized housing policy, its strengths and weaknesses, the following improvement points are highlighted to ensure the continued effectiveness and progressive refinement of the policy:

- Update income threshold and set targets by adjusting to inflation (e.g., R5,000 per month) and define clear 2030 targets (e.g., 25,000 units, 60% integrated with nodes).
- Mandatory viability audits to check the economic, social, and infrastructure viability assessments for all proposed sites, aligned with the LSDF, 2025 housing corridors.
- Refine beneficiary targeting to include gender, disability, and youth considerations to ensure inclusive housing delivery.
- Clear monitoring and performance indicators to introduce measurable KPIs for integrated settlement success, infrastructure sufficiency, and social outcomes.

5.2.5 Sustainability Policy

The sustainable development policy defines sustainable development as “the capacity to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It emphasises responsible resource management, energy efficiency, and ecological sustainability through the adoption of renewable energy technologies. The policy addressed multiple sustainability domains:

- **Energy Efficiency** – Advocates for solar-heated water systems, gas for cooking, energy-efficient lighting, limitations on air conditioning, and promotion of renewables.
- **Water Conservation** – Encourages rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, and catchment protection.





- **Waste Water Treatment** – Calls for upgrading Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs), wetland protection, and alternative sanitation systems such as Enviro-loos and artificial wetlands.
- **Sustainable Building Guidelines** – Promote passive solar design, local/renewable materials, and context-sensitive architecture that blends with the natural environment.
- **Waste Recycling** – Endorses a waste hierarchy approach, separation at source, and use of transfer stations.

Review Analysis & Recommendation

The Sustainability Policy presents both strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, however, the strategy remains highly relevant and necessary.

The following points outline the key highlights identified during the review:

- Provided a detailed, mandatory energy and water efficiency requirements (e.g., “all new developments shall demonstrate energy efficiency”), supported by practical visual references.
- Links multiple sustainability themes such as water, biodiversity, and waste, including local challenges like invasive alien species management.
- Encourages alternative technologies (e.g., artificial wetlands, renewable building materials) and passive design principles such as north orientation for climate adaptation.

- The policy didn’t bring forth measures for existing buildings in nodal points, which limits its overall impact.
- Does not reflect advancements beyond 2020, such as smart-grid systems, advanced battery storage, or AI-based energy management, limiting alignment with 2025 sustainability innovations.
- No clear performance metrics (e.g., greenhouse gas reduction targets, renewable energy adoption percentages, or water-saving thresholds).

In understanding the analysis of the sustainability policy, its strengths and weaknesses, the following improvement points are highlighted to ensure the continued effectiveness and progressive refinement of the policy:

Expand Scope to Include Retrofitting and Existing Infrastructure

- Extend policy coverage to include energy and water efficiency retrofits for existing public facilities, housing, and industrial areas.
- Provide incentives or rebates for green building upgrades.

Update Technology Standards and Innovation Alignment

- Incorporate emerging technologies such as smart metering, battery storage, and decentralized microgrids, reflecting 2025 energy trends.
- Align with the National Energy Efficiency Strategy (2020–2030) and Just Energy Transition Framework.





Introduce Quantifiable Targets and Indicators

- Define measurable 2030 targets such as:
 - 30% reduction in municipal energy intensity,
 - 50% of new housing with solar water heating,
 - 25% municipal solid waste recycling rate.
- Establish monitoring tools for tracking and reporting sustainability performance annually.

Institutionalise Green Building Standards

- Mandate adoption of Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) rating tools for municipal buildings and large-scale developments.
- Encourage private sector compliance through incentives and recognition schemes.

5.2.6 Demarcation of sites in Traditional Authority/Council areas

The Demarcation of Sites in Traditional Authority areas was designed to assist Traditional Leaders and their Headmen in establishing properly surveyed settlements guided by approved General Plans, ensuring that such areas are suitable for sustainable human habitation. The policy primarily applies to land under Traditional Councils and aims to integrate communal land development into formal municipal planning frameworks. The policy is looked at the following:

- **Objective** – Promote the efficient utilization of land, ensure access to basic services, establish planned settlements with defined road hierarchies, protect environmentally sensitive areas, and preserve agricultural land.
- **Description** – Provides a structured process for demarcating stands, transforming undeveloped or derelict land into land suitable for residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional purposes. The process concludes upon General Plan approval.
- **Locality** – Applies to areas under Traditional Councils within the Thulamela Municipality.
- **Specific Objectives** – Prevent unplanned and uncontrolled informal settlements, create sustainable and orderly human settlements, and improve service delivery potential.
- **Guidelines** – Detail the procedural steps for implementation beginning with a Traditional Council's request for assistance, followed by municipal facilitation, intergovernmental coordination (e.g., with Provincial CoGTA), and, where necessary, the appointment of professional town planners and land surveyors to address capacity gaps.

Review Analysis & Recommendation

The Demarcation of sites in Traditional Authority Areas presents both strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, however, the strategy remains highly





relevant and necessary. The following points outline the key highlights identified during the review:

- Collaborative and inclusive governance by empowering Traditional Councils to initiate demarcation processes while ensuring municipal facilitation and provincial coordination (via CoGTA). This strengthens cooperative governance and respects customary land systems while embedding them in formal planning structures.
- Structured and practical implementation by the inclusion of clear procedural steps, such as the use of professional planners and surveyors, promotes orderly, technically sound settlement establishment and links to the SDF for spatial consistency.
- Supports sustainable development by encouraging serviced, well-planned human settlements that facilitate equitable access to infrastructure and reduce the proliferation of unregulated informal sprawl.
- The implementation success depends heavily on municipal and professional capacity. In cases of limited resources or technical expertise, processes are delayed as reflected in IDP consultations highlighting prolonged township approvals.
- While facilitating demarcation, the policy does not extend to land tenure upgrading, leaving ownership and legal security issues unresolved in many communal areas.

In understanding the analysis of the demarcation of sites in Traditional Authority areas, its strengths and weaknesses, the following improvement points are highlighted to ensure the continued effectiveness and progressive refinement of the policy:

- Ensure provincial and municipal grant allocations (e.g., through CoGTA) specifically for site demarcation, professional services, and technical capacity-building, as proposed in the LSDF, 2025 communal land development focus.
- Pilot communal land tenure models (e.g., long-term use rights or communal title deeds) in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), aiming for secure tenure in at least 50 formalized settlements by 2030.

5.2.7 Incentives Policy

The Incentives Policy aims to attract investment into the Thulamela municipal area by aligning financial and non-financial incentives with the SDF *Desired Spatial Pattern*. The policy defines an incentive as “a financial inducement offered to a private company or developer in exchange for establishing new business activities or expanding existing ones.” Key components include:

- **Types of Incentives** – Rebates on town planning approvals, discounts on property rates and taxes, reductions on the sale or lease of municipal land, and discounts on municipal services.
- **Guiding Principles** – Incentives should target new investments in key economic nodes, discourage speculation, be performance-based,





include clawback provisions, promote job creation, undergo cost-benefit analysis, contribute to social upliftment, and empower historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs).

- **Policy Objective** – To align investment incentives with spatial priorities and stimulate a *multiplier effect* that reinforces the SDF’s vision for sustainable, inclusive growth.

Review Analysis & Recommendation

The Incentives Policy presents both strengths and weaknesses in its implementation, however, the strategy remains highly relevant and necessary.

The following points outline the key highlights identified during the review:

- It contains *clawback provisions* and *cost-benefit analysis* frameworks promote fiscal responsibility and ensure incentives are performance-based rather than purely upfront inducements.
- Offers diverse incentive tools (e.g., rebates, rate discounts, service reductions) adaptable to various investment types and aligned with the SDF’s spatial efficiency principles.
- Encourages investments that generate secondary economic benefits stimulating supply chains, local employment, and market linkages.
- Lack of green and digital incentives post-2023 challenges (e.g., Eskom reliability, digital economy growth) are not addressed. There are no incentives for renewable energy adoption, smart infrastructure, or digital innovation.

- Urban bias whereby the focus on “key nodes” excludes smaller rural settlements, contradicting inclusive development principles in the IDP and SDF.

In understanding the analysis of the incentives policy, its strengths and weaknesses, the following improvement points are highlighted to ensure the continued effectiveness and progressive refinement of the policy:

- Introduce green and digital incentives to expand the incentive suite to include tax rebates or service discounts for renewable energy installations, water conservation systems, and broadband-enabled business developments, aligning with national sustainability goals and Thulamela’s 2024/25 IDP energy resilience targets.
- Incorporate skills and capacity development to link incentives to local training partnerships, apprenticeships, and enterprise support programs to ensure sustainable job creation and community empowerment.
- Balance spatial focus to Introduce differentiated incentives for rural nodes (e.g., agricultural processing, eco-tourism) to prevent urban-centric investment concentration and promote balanced regional growth.

5.3 LAND USE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM GUIDELINES

Section 26(e) of the MSA, (Act 32 of 2000) stipulates that the Local Municipality should prepare a SDF which must include basic guidelines for a





LUMS as part of the IDP. The purpose of this section is twofold and to also identify basic guidelines for land development with respect to:

- Residential
- Rural residential
- Agriculture
- Tourism and accommodation
- Recreation Facilities and Estates
- Cemeteries
- Industrial
- Open space

5.3.1 The residential development category

The SDF under review emphasizes two focus areas: affordable housing and informal settlement upgrading. The guidelines for affordable housing promote development within or adjacent to existing urban areas where bulk municipal services are already available. This approach supports infill development and discourages urban sprawl, which aligns with SPLUMA's principle of spatial efficiency. It further encourages municipalities to use publicly owned land to reduce costs and administrative delays.

Moreover, the SDF also highlights the importance of environmental compliance by ensuring that affordable housing projects avoid environmentally sensitive areas and adhere to all relevant environmental requirements. Furthermore, the framework promotes accessibility by recommending that housing developments be located near social amenities, economic nodes, and public transport routes to enhance inclusivity and sustainability.

Affordable housing is therefore envisioned not only as a means of shelter but also as a mechanism to integrate communities, strengthen the urban structure, and promote sustainable human settlements within the defined urban edge. Similarly, the guidelines for informal settlement upgrading adopt the same principles as those of affordable housing, except for land ownership considerations, since most informal settlements are located on tribal or state land. The emphasis on upgrading instead of relocation supports the national Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP), which advocates for in-situ development to promote tenure security and community stability.

5.3.2 The agricultural land use guidelines

The SDF under review aims to preserve agriculture as a dominant and sustainable land use in the rural landscape of TLM. The document emphasizes compliance with key legislation such as the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (Act 43 of 1983), and the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998). These legal frameworks collectively support the protection of high-potential agricultural land from fragmentation and unsustainable subdivision.

The SDF encourages consolidation of agricultural land and promotes sustainable farming practices, including maintaining natural corridors, avoiding endangered habitats, adopting rotational grazing, and mitigating fire risks. The guidelines also support the establishment of small-scale and emerging farmers near towns and along rural movement routes to strengthen local economies and enhance rural-urban linkages. The section introduces the concept of agri-villages, which are defined as sustainable settlements for bona fide rural workers and their dependants.





The SDF recommends that these villages use sustainable service technologies such as solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilets. Moreover, accessibility to main roads is considered essential, and settlements should exclude people not directly involved in agricultural production. This reinforces the principle of functional land use allocation, ensuring that agricultural land remains productive while supporting rural livelihoods.

5.3.3 Rural Industry (Agricultural – Based)

Furthermore, the SDF recognizes rural industry as a strategic component of agricultural development. Rural industries, which include the processing of local agricultural products, mining, and natural resource utilization, are permitted on the condition that they remain ancillary to the dominant agricultural use of the property. This prevents the displacement of agricultural activity and maintains the economic balance of rural areas. The guidelines stipulate those extractive industries must comply with the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (2000) and NEMA regulations, while worker accommodation should be in nearby urban areas with appropriate social services. This reflects SPLUMA's principle of spatial sustainability and integration by preventing isolated rural settlements that lack adequate infrastructure.

5.3.4 Tourism and Accommodation

The tourism and accommodation guidelines aim to promote tourism in rural areas while protecting environmental and cultural assets. The SDF encourages tourism development that is resource-based, meaning that projects should capitalize on natural or cultural features such as rivers, springs, or heritage sites.

The guidelines require that tourism developments avoid environmentally sensitive and high-risk areas, such as floodplains or steep slopes, and must be subject to EIA's.

The SDF further stipulates specific development parameters for different types of accommodations, such as bed-and-breakfasts, guesthouses, boutique hotels, and resorts.

These parameters help control density, building size, and land use intensity, ensuring that tourism development remains compatible with rural landscapes. For example, resorts are limited to fifty units and must maintain a single-storey height, preserving the rural character of the environment.

5.3.5 Recreational Facilities and Estates

The TLMSDF 2019, utilised this guideline to categorize areas into urban, core, and buffer zones, imposing varying levels of restrictions to prevent habitat loss, water overuse, and urban sprawl. The primary objectives of this guideline seeks to promote sustainable development by minimizing environmental impacts while supporting rural economic diversification. It seeks to protect biodiversity, agricultural land, and cultural heritage, ensure equitable access to natural resources for local communities, and align developments with municipal plans to avoid unplanned growth.

Key Guidelines

The guidelines are structured around three main categories urban areas, core areas, and buffer areas each with specific criteria to determine suitability. Developments must adhere to conditions related to location, environmental sensitivity, water use, and community access. For instance, in urban areas,





projects are more permissible if they define urban edges or integrate with open space systems, provided they avoid flood-prone zones and conservation sites.

To enhance this framework, the following are proposed:

- Guidelines to promote drought-resistant landscaping.
- Post-development monitoring through environmental management plans and periodic audits.
- Integrating digital tools for real-time biodiversity mapping and updating.





Table 49: Recreational Facilities and Estates

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	KEY CRITERIA
Urban Areas	Land within or adjacent to urban edges, including open spaces.	• Adjacent to urban areas to define edges. • Part of municipal open space systems. • Densification on existing amenities without compromising recreation. • Avoid areas for urban densification, conservation, or cultural significance. • No development within 30m of water features or below 1:100-year floodlines. • Water demand aligned with municipal plans; no stress on resources. • Maintain community access routes.
Core Areas	Proclaimed reserves, ecological corridors, and critically endangered habitats.	• No developments allowed. • Adjacent projects must include buffers with indigenous vegetation. • Prevent loss of endangered habitats or corridor functionality.
Buffer Areas	Remaining natural habitats in endangered ecosystems and extensive agricultural lands (excluding intensive agriculture).	• Allowed on urban-buffer borders if achieving biodiversity offsets or supporting agriculture/land reform. • Limit units to avoid secondary development. • Avoid high-value agricultural land, cultural sites, or urban sprawl. • No impact on stressed water resources or ecological corridors. • Stay outside 30m water buffers or 1:100-year floodlines. • Preserve community access and landscape form.





5.3.6 Industrial

The provided guidelines for industrial and commercial development outline key principles to ensure sustainable and efficient land use. These focus on site suitability, accessibility, proximity considerations, and environmental compliance. The guidelines aim to promote sustainable industrial and commercial development by ensuring developments are located on appropriate terrain, are accessible, and minimize negative impacts on residential areas and natural resources. They prioritize efficient use of existing zoned land, environmental and health compliance, and the isolation of noxious industries to protect communities and ecosystems.

To strengthen these guidelines, the following are more enhancements to be considered:

- **Climate Resilience:** Introduce requirements for energy-efficient designs, renewable energy use, or water recycling in industrial facilities to address climate change and resource scarcity, particularly in water-stressed areas of the TLM.
- **Digital Integration:** Leverage GIS-based tools for real-time mapping of suitable sites, considering factors like slope, transport networks, and environmental constraints, to improve planning precision.
- **Circular Economy Principles:** Encourage industries to adopt waste minimization and recycling practices, aligning with global sustainability trends.





Table 50: Industrial Guidelines outlook

GUIDELINE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE
Slope Suitability	Ideal slope of 1:200 or less for commercial/industrial land to avoid expensive cut-and-fill operations.	Minimises construction costs and environmental disturbance from altering terrain.
Land Requirements	Large areas with gentle slopes are preferred for industrial/commercial developments.	Ensures sufficient space for facilities and efficient site layout.
Accessibility	Easy access to road and/or rail transport is essential for new industrial areas.	Supports logistics, reduces transport costs, and enhances economic viability.
Proximity to Residential Areas	Service and light industries may be located near residential areas; noxious industries must be isolated.	Balances convenience for service industries while protecting residents from pollution or hazards.
Land Use Efficiency	Existing industrial/commercial zoned land must be substantially utilized before new areas are developed.	Prevents urban sprawl and optimizes infrastructure investment.
Noxious Industry Isolation	Noxious industries should be located in designated areas, considering prevailing winds, downstream resources, accessibility, infrastructure, and waste management.	Mitigates environmental and health risks to communities and ecosystems.
Regulatory Compliance	All industries must adhere to environmental and health standards.	Ensures sustainable operations and protects public health and natural resources.





5.3.7 Cemeteries

Cemeteries form an integral part of a TLM's social infrastructure and spatial planning framework, providing essential spaces for burial, remembrance, and cultural expression. Proper planning and management of cemeteries ensure that communities have dignified and accessible burial grounds that align with environmental sustainability, public health, and spatial efficiency principles.

As urbanisation increases and available land becomes scarce, municipalities must adopt proactive and environmentally responsible approaches to cemetery development. This includes careful site selection, protection of ecological systems, provision of adequate facilities, and integration of cemeteries into broader settlement planning. The following policy guidelines should therefore inform the identification, development, and management of cemetery sites within the municipality, ensuring that they are sustainable, accessible, and respectful of diverse cultural and religious practices.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Geotechnical Study

Before any cemetery is approved, an EIA and a Geotechnical Study are required. The EIA identifies environmental risks, sensitive areas, and mitigation measures to protect ecosystems and water resources. The Geotechnical Study assesses soil stability, groundwater, and drainage to ensure the site is safe for burials and suitable for cemetery infrastructure.

Distance from Access Roads and Places of Worship

Cemeteries must be accessible via all-weather roads for visitors and funeral processions, while maintaining a buffer from major roads to reduce noise and

visual intrusion. They should also be located at a respectful distance from places of worship to prevent conflicts and maintain a peaceful environment, with landscaping and fencing to enhance privacy and serenity.

Distance from Water Courses

To protect water resources and public health, cemeteries must be set back from rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. Sites should avoid flood-prone areas and shallow water tables, and proper drainage and stormwater systems should be implemented. Environmental monitoring is required to prevent contamination.

Provision of Public Amenities

Cemeteries should provide basic facilities for visitors and staff, including parking, ablution facilities, seating, waste management, shelters, and security measures. Pathways and landscaping should be accessible and promote a serene, ecologically friendly environment through indigenous plants and green spaces.

Reversion Clause in the Title Deed

A reversion clause ensures that land allocated for cemeteries is developed within a specified timeframe. If not developed, the land reverts to other uses, preventing land speculation and ensuring alignment with municipal planning objectives. Municipal legal and land use departments must oversee compliance.





Detailed Site Suitability Studies

Once potential sites are identified, detailed investigations confirm technical, environmental, and social suitability. These studies ensure that the site is safe, accessible, and appropriate for cemetery development before final approval.

It is recommended that the municipality adopt and enforce these cemetery development guidelines as part of its spatial planning and land use management processes. The municipality should incorporate them into its IDP, SDF, and LUMS to guide site selection, approval, and management of cemeteries. Furthermore, collaboration between the Environmental Management, Human Settlements, Infrastructure Services, and Community Services Departments is essential to ensure that cemeteries are planned in a coordinated and sustainable manner, in line with environmental legislation and community needs.

5.3.8 Open Space

In Thulamela, open spaces are preserved or managed areas that support ecological, recreational, aesthetic, and planning functions. They protect sensitive environments, provide community amenities, guide settlement patterns, promote urban densification, and ensure sustainable land use for the well-being of both people and natural resources. In TLM there are two types of open spaces which are:

- Primary open spaces: Large, regionally significant natural areas such as mountain ranges, rivers, wetlands, and proclaimed nature reserves. These form the backbone of the municipality's ecological network.

- Secondary open spaces: Smaller, local areas like parks, gardens, sports fields, or riparian buffers that serve local communities and link settlements to primary open spaces.

Guidelines for Planning and Design of open space networks:

Active Open Spaces

Fewer, well-developed, and well-maintained active open spaces are more effective and beneficial than a larger number of poorly maintained ones.

Location of Larger Parks

Large parks should be situated in areas with limited access to natural amenities, such as mountains or coastlines, and should be evenly distributed. Where possible, they should be connected via parkways to allow walking access within approximately 500 meters or 10 minutes.

Multi-use Large Parks

Large parks can incorporate complementary functions such as urban agriculture, fuelwood planting, waste disposal, and nature conservation, creating multifunctional spaces that serve both ecological and community needs.

Location of Smaller Parks

Smaller parks should be within easy walking distance (around 300 meters) of residential, commercial, or industrial areas.





They provide relief spaces, safeplay areas for children, and shared recreational opportunities near schools, allowing for easy supervision.

Location of Larger Sports Fields

Larger sports fields should be clustered around schools and private sports clubs to allow shared use, maximize utilization, and ensure amenities are accessible to multiple user groups at different times of the day.

Access to Public Transport

Sports fields should be located near public transport routes to facilitate easy access for visiting teams and spectators.

Low-Lying Land and Stormwater Management

Sports fields can be placed on low-lying land near watercourses and integrated into parkways to serve as part of the stormwater management system during heavy rainfall or storms.

The open space guidelines provide a practical framework emphasizing quality, accessibility, and multifunctional use. They promote urban densification, equitable access, safety, and integration with ecological and stormwater systems. It is recommended that the municipality adopt these guidelines within the SDF, IDP, and LUMS to guide open space allocation, design, and maintenance, ensuring sustainable, well-connected, and community-friendly spaces.

5.4 SECTOR PLAN ALIGNMENT

Sector Plans are specialized, detailed strategies developed to guide development, investment, and service delivery in specific functional areas within a municipality or region. They translate the broad objectives of higher-level frameworks such as the IDP and the SDF into actionable, sector-specific initiatives. These plans are critical because they provide technical guidance, standards, and priorities that ensure municipal development is coordinated, sustainable, and aligned with national and provincial policies by focusing on particular sectors, municipalities can identify gaps, allocate resources efficiently, and monitor progress in achieving service delivery and development objectives. The sector plans include:

- Housing Sector Plans: Guide the development of sustainable human settlements and housing delivery.
- Integrated Transport Plans (ITP): Address Road networks, public transport systems, and overall mobility.
- Water Services Development Plans (WSDP): Ensure sustainable provision of water and sanitation services.
- Energy Plans: Promote electrification, energy efficiency, and renewable energy integration.
- Environmental Management Frameworks (EMF): Protect ecological systems and manage environmental impacts.
- Local Economic Development (LED) Strategies: Promote job creation, economic diversification, and investment opportunities.





- Disaster Management Plans: Identify risks and outline prevention, response, and mitigation strategies.
- Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMP): Ensure efficient and sustainable solid waste management.
- Tourism Development Strategies: Guide tourism infrastructure and promotion initiatives.
- Agricultural Development Plans: Support productivity, rural livelihoods, and food security.

Sector plans are closely linked to the SDF, which provides the spatial context for sectoral interventions. They help determine where infrastructure, services, and development should be located, ensuring that growth is both balanced and sustainable across urban and rural areas. Key considerations in preparing sector plans include alignment with national and provincial policies, the use of accurate data and standards, integration across sectors to avoid duplication, and the development of implementation frameworks with clear roles, responsibilities, and monitoring mechanisms. In essence, sector plans are the operational backbone of municipal planning, turning strategic vision into practical, targeted actions that improve service delivery, foster economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for communities.





Table 51: Sector Plan and Policy Alignment

PLAN OR STRATEGY	IN PLACE/NOT IN PLACE	DATE OF APPROVAL	COMMENT
Water Services Development Plan	Not in Place	N/A	N/A
Local Economic Development Strategy	In Place	N/A	N/A
Comprehensive Infrastructure Plan (CIP)	Not in Place	N/A	N/A
Integrated Transport Plan	Not in Place	N/A	N/A
Updated Housing Sector Plan	In Place	N/A	N/A
Energy Master Plan	Not in Place	N/A	N/A
Disaster Management Plan	In Place	2010	Due for Review
Tourism Plan/Strategy	Not in Place	N/A	N/A
Integrated Waste Management Plan	In Place	2010	Due for Review
Environmental Management Plan	In Place	2010	Due for Review
Thulamela Biodiversity Sector Plan	In Place	N/A	N/A
ICT Strategy	In Place	2010	Due for Review
Road Management System	In Place	N/A	N/A
Industrial Strategy	Not in Place	N/A	N/A
Densification Policy	In Place		Due for Review





5.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Municipalities must continuously evaluate and monitor the impact of their activities and service delivery to ensure that objectives are being met and communities benefit effectively. By assessing outcomes and sharing results with both internal and external stakeholders, municipalities promote accountability, transparency, and trust. This feedback enables the organization to adapt strategies, improve services, and respond to changing needs, ensuring that initiatives remain relevant, efficient, and sustainable for the communities they serve. TLM SDF 2019 has proposed the development of the Result-Based Management Framework.

The Results-Based Management (RBM) is a strategic management approach that emphasizes achieving clearly defined results rather than just completing activities or producing outputs. It focuses on linking resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and long-term impacts in a structured way to ensure that interventions deliver tangible benefits. RBM promotes accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making by continuously monitoring and evaluating performance against set objectives. The function of the Results-Based Management (RBM) approach is to ensure that planning, implementation, and decision-making processes are focused on achieving specific, measurable results. Instead of concentrating only on activities or outputs, RBM emphasizes the outcomes and impacts that those activities produce. Key functions of RBM include:

- **Strategic Planning:** It helps organizations define clear goals, desired outcomes, and performance indicators, ensuring that all actions are aligned with long-term objectives.
- **Performance Monitoring:** RBM establishes systems to track progress using measurable indicators, allowing for continuous assessment of performance and early identification of challenges.
- **Evaluation and Learning:** It facilitates the evaluation of results to determine what worked, what didn't, and why promoting learning and improvement across projects and programs.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** RBM enhances accountability by linking resources and actions directly to measurable results, making it easier to report to stakeholders and demonstrate value for money.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** through regular monitoring and evaluation, RBM provides evidence-based information that supports better policy, budgeting, and operational decisions.
- **Resource Optimization:** It ensures efficient use of financial, human, and technical resources by focusing investments on interventions that produce the greatest impact.

By tracking progress at each level, municipalities can ensure that their efforts are aligned with strategic goals and adjust interventions as needed to maximize effectiveness.





The application of the Results-Based Management (RBM) approach within the Thulamela Spatial Development will ensure that future urban and rural development programmes, infrastructure investments, and service delivery initiatives are results-oriented and measurable. This approach will guide the municipality in prioritizing projects more effectively, allocating resources efficiently, and evaluating the impact of planning and investment decisions. By adopting RBM, Thulamela Municipality will strengthen accountability, improve performance, and enhance the overall quality of life for its communities. In short, the function of RBM is to improve effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability in development planning and management by ensuring that every action contributes clearly to achieving the intended results.

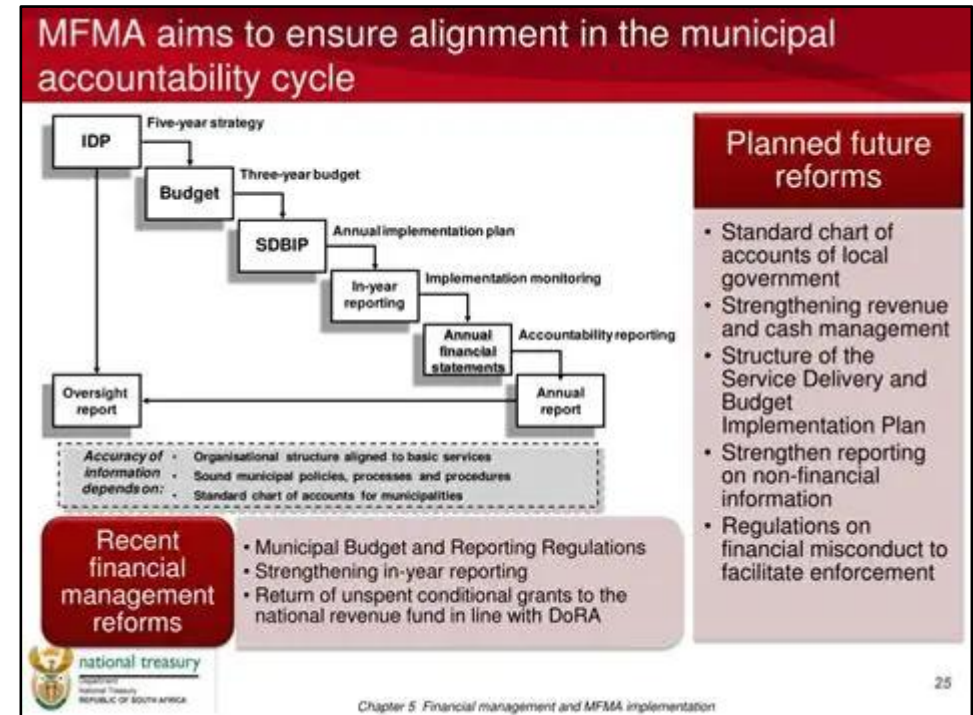
5.6 SERVICE DELIVERY & BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SDBIP)

SDBIP (Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan) is a municipal operational plan that translates the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the annual budget into practical actions, measurable targets, and clear timelines. It serves as a roadmap for municipalities to implement their plans effectively and deliver services efficiently to communities.

The purpose of the SDBIP is to guide service delivery, ensure that municipal projects are aligned with the budget, and promote accountability. By linking financial resources directly to specific projects and programmes, it helps municipalities track progress and achieve their objectives. The SDBIP is also a legal requirement, mandated by the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA). According to the Act, the mayor must approve the SDBIP within 28

days of adopting the annual budget, making it a critical tool for governance and compliance.

Figure 28: Service Delivery & Budget Implementation Plan according to MFMA



In TLM, the SDBIP is used by municipal officials for implementation, councillors for oversight, and the public for monitoring service delivery and accountability. Finally, the components of an SDBIP include detailed service delivery targets, budget allocations linked to projects or programmes, key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure success, and clear responsibility assignments to specific staff members.





Together, these elements make the SDBIP a practical and transparent tool for municipal planning, budgeting, and performance monitoring.

The Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) provides the mechanism through which the Implementation Plan is executed. While the Implementation Plan outlines priority projects and interventions, the SDBIP translates these into annual, funded activities with clear timeframes, performance indicators, and assigned responsibilities. This ensures effective implementation, monitoring, and accountability, and confirms alignment between strategic planning, budgeting, and service delivery. The SDBIP is like a roadmap or action plan for a municipality, showing what it will do, how much it will spend, who is responsible, and by when it will achieve results.

From 2019 – 2023, Thulamela generally complied with MFMA reporting obligations, producing audited financial statements and performance plans that were largely reliable.

2023/24 marked a regression, with a qualified audit opinion pointing to:

- Inadequate financial statement preparation and record keeping
- Errors in procurement and billing processes
- Weaknesses in performance management reporting.

These issues demonstrate gaps in the municipal accountability cycle, where internal controls, compliance and oversight failed to fully align with MFMA's requirements in that year.

What this means for implementation:

- The link between budget to SDBIP to performance evidence weakened
- Projects may not have been properly recorded
- Oversight structures (MPAC, Internal Audit) did not fully prevent control failures

When financial reporting weakens, implementation credibility weakens. The MFMA audit outcome exposed gaps in execution and control systems. In a nutshell the MFMA strengthens implementation by institutionalising the SDBIP as the operational expression of the budget. In TLM, sustained unqualified audit outcomes between 2019 and 2022 reflected effective alignment between planning, budgeting and implementation. However, the 2023/24 qualified audit outcome demonstrates how weaknesses in financial controls and performance reporting disrupt the accountability cycle and weaken implementation focus.





6. CONCLUSION

The review confirms that the TLM SDF provides a coherent long-term spatial vision aligned to national and provincial legislation, including SPLUMA and the Municipal Systems Act (MSA). The SDF outlines spatial restructuring priorities, economic infrastructure investment areas, economic nodes, and sustainable land use management strategies intended to guide development within the TLM.

The effectiveness of the SDF, however, is dependent on the strength of its implementation framework. Implementation requires full integration with the IDP and the SDBIP, MFMA.

Between the 2019/20 and 2021/22 financial years, TLM demonstrated improved alignment between planning, budgeting, and reporting processes, as reflected in unqualified audit outcomes. During this period, the MFMA accountability cycle supported more structured capital investment planning and performance monitoring, strengthening implementation of infrastructure and service delivery priorities aligned with the SDF.

However, audit findings in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years highlighted weaknesses in internal controls, procurement compliance, revenue management, and performance reporting. These governance challenges directly impact the TLM capacity to effectively implement spatial priorities, as sustainable spatial transformation depends on sound financial management, credible reporting systems, and effective oversight mechanisms.

This review therefore concludes that while the SDF remains strategically sound, its successful implementation requires strengthened financial governance,

improved performance management systems, enhanced interdepartmental coordination, and consistent oversight by Council structures within TLM.

6.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Spatial priorities must be fully integrated into annual budgeting and capital investment planning.
- The SDBIP must clearly reflect measurable spatial implementation targets.
- Internal controls and compliance mechanisms must be strengthened to restore audit performance.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems must provide credible evidence of project delivery.
- Oversight structures, including MPAC, must actively monitor implementation performance.

6.2 RECOMMENDATION

- Notes the conclusions of the SDF Implementation Framework Review.
- Supports strengthened alignment between TLMs: SDF, IDP, Budget, and SDBIP.
- Directs administration to reinforce financial controls and performance reporting systems to enhance spatial implementation effectiveness.
- Mandates quarterly reporting to Council on progress made in aligning spatial priorities with capital budgeting and implementation plan.





In conclusion, the long-term success of the spatial transformation within TLM depends not only on strategic planning, but on disciplined financial management, institutional stability, and effective oversight. Strengthening the implementation framework and capital investment framework will enhance the TLM's ability to translate spatial proposals and plans for the TLM SDF under Review, into tangible and sustainable development outcomes.

Moreover, in order for TLM to achieve the city status in 2030 the implementation framework and the capital investment framework needs to responds to challenges identified as well as opportunities brought forward or proposed for all integrated human settlements within TLM and this is inclusive of settlements under Traditional Authorities/Councils in order for a successful spatial transformation.





Table 52: Summary of the MSDF in alignment with section 21 of SPLUMA, Act 16 of 2013

CONTENT	STRATEGY OR ELEMENT										
Spatial Vision for the Thulamela Local Municipality	<i>"To promote integrated urban and rural development, whilst encouraging local economic development in order to improve the quality of lives of our people".</i>										
Long Term Vision	<i>"A Sustainable Agro-Tourism City of Opportunities, Heritage and Inclusive Growth."</i>										
Core settlements of nodal area	Thohoyandou-Sibasa; Tshilamba; Makonde/Khubvi/Mukula; Lwamondo/Tshisaulu; Tshireke/Vhufuli/Vondwe; Tshikombani; Makuya; Tshaulu/Gaba/Tshifudi; Tshixwadza; Makuvha/Tshilivho										
Settlements earmarked for Rural Restructuring	Ngovhela, Tswinga, Maungani, Mbilwi, Lufule, Tshikweta, Phalama, Mulodi, Lukau, Thengwe, Mianzwi, Tshivhilwi, Tshidimbini, Mbahela, Muhuyu, Matangari, Luvhumbi, Begwa, Tshidzini, Dimani, Phaswane, Gaba, Matatshe, Vondwe, Tshireke, Ngwenani ya Ha-Mapholi, Tshilapfene, Mapate, Khumbe, Matatani, Itsani, Belemu, Tshiema, Tshisaulu, Dopeni, Mandala, Tshivhilidulu, Shanzha, Khalavha, Tshiheni, Gogogo, Luheni, Dzamba, Makuleni, Madatshitshi, Khakhu, Gunyani, Musunda, Domboni, Muhotoni, Maholoni, Gondeni, Vhurivhuri and Halambani										
Focus Areas of Economic Activity and Employment	Thohoyandou-Sibasa; Tshilamba										
Spatial Planning Tools	• Urban Edge Delineation and Management • Densification, Formalisation and Infill Development • Land Use and Transportation Integration • Municipal Open Space System (MOSS) • Urban-Rural Integration Strategy										
Population estimates	<table> <tr> <th>Year</th><th>Population</th></tr> <tr> <td>2011</td><td>450 931</td></tr> <tr> <td>2022</td><td>575 929</td></tr> <tr> <td>2025</td><td>615 145</td></tr> <tr> <td>2030</td><td>685 119</td></tr> </table>	Year	Population	2011	450 931	2022	575 929	2025	615 145	2030	685 119
Year	Population										
2011	450 931										
2022	575 929										
2025	615 145										
2030	685 119										





CONTENT	STRATEGY OR ELEMENT
Planning for new housing opportunities	• Formalisation of settlements. • PSHDA's. • Demarcation of Sites in rural villages • Township Establishments (i.e., Mphaphuli Town)
Environmental issues	• Environmental sensitive areas as indicated in the CBA's and ESA's • Protection of Prime Agricultural areas.
Land Use Management	• Tenure upgrading • formalisation of settlements • Implementation of general Rezoning and promotion of Mixed Uses
Well located land (Land with economic opportunity and/or land for acquisition purposes or land release)	Land along the identified nodal points as well as other Strategic Development Areas (SDA's), especially land zoned for Mixed Use.
Engineering services requirements	• Bulk water • Bulk sewer, • Roads, • Storm Water Drainage
Priority Projects	• Upgrade all compacted/gravel roads to tarred roads. • Provide and upgrade existing Bus and Taxi Transfer Ranks within all identified nodes or SDAs. • Bulk Water Supply to all villages earmarked for rural restructuring. • Bulk Sewer Supply to all villages earmarked for rural restructuring. • Construction of Land fill site. • Develop a strategy for protecting prime agricultural land in areas under Traditional Authorities. • PSHDA's (Diverse Housing Options). • Demarcation of Sites on proposed residential extension areas under Traditional Authority/Councils areas. • Develop an Integrated Transport Plan for the TLM





CONTENT	STRATEGY OR ELEMENT
	• Cemeteries Upgrades and Extension in all villages within TLM. • CBD's Upgrades and Revitalisation in Thohoyandou-Sibasa and Tshialamba. • Agricultural Revitalization of Irrigation Schemes. • Revitalization of Tourism Attractions (routes and infrastructure). • Protection of Environmental Sensitive Areas
Community amenities shortfall	• Library • Police Stations • Multi-Purpose Sports Grounds • Multi-Purpose Community Centres • Public Parks

