Outline Planning Scheme for
Grand Port Savanne
District Council Area

September 2006
(as subsequently modified November 2011)

Prepared by the Planning Division, Ministry responsible for
Housing and Lands on behalf of the Town and Country Planning
Board
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1 Purpose of the Outline Planning Scheme

1.1 Boundaries of Grand Port Savanne District Council Area

This Outline Planning Scheme covers Grand Port Savanne District Council Area (DCA). The boundaries of the Scheme which are illustrated in Figure 1.1 have been drawn in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 (as subsequently amended by proclamation No 25 of 2001).

Figure 1.1 Grand Port Savanne DCA Outline Scheme Boundaries

1.2 Functions of the Outline Planning Scheme

This Outline Planning Scheme has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1954. Section 11 of the Act places an obligation on the Town and Country Planning Board (TCPB) to prepare an Outline Planning Scheme (OPS) for each declared planning area. The area under the administrative jurisdiction of the Grand Port Savanne District Council has been declared as Planning Area No. 10 as per Government Notice No. 2377 of 2004. It is shown in Figure 1.1.
There are three functions of this OPS:

- To provide guidance to scheme promoters, developers and individuals contemplating a development project and the subsequent submission of a building and land use permit application;
- To assist Government officers at Ministry and local authority levels when offering advice to developers and when subsequently assessing permit applications; and
- To provide the physical development focus for programmes and projects from the variety of Ministries and agencies, as well as the private and non-governmental sectors which have an interest in land development.

The 1954 Act provides for approved Schemes to be used as the main reference against which building and land use permit applications are judged. Moreover, the provisions of an approved Scheme will be key factors when considering appeals against refusal to grant a building and land use permit.

1.3 Timeframe of the Outline Planning Scheme

This Outline Planning Scheme is principally concerned with development up to the year 2015. However, modifications can be effected under Section 24 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1954.

1.4 Planning and Development Act 2004


Because the new Planning and Development Act has yet to be fully proclaimed and changes will occur to the 1989 Local Government Act through the Local Government Act 2003 once it is also fully proclaimed, existing Acts and terminology prevail and thus the terms District Council and Outline Planning Scheme have been retained for use in this document.

1.5 Strategic Environmental Appraisal and Monitoring

A Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA) is required under the Environment Protection Act 2002 for an Outline Planning Scheme.

For this Outline Planning Scheme, given the database, resources available and timescale for completion, a modified version of the SEA process has been adopted.
1.6 **Implementation**

Grand Port Savanne District Council is the main agency responsible for implementation of this Scheme through the development control provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1954 and the Local Government Act 2003.

The Planning and Development Act 2004 once fully proclaimed will provide for the transfer of building and land use permitting powers to the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands for state -significant developments, as well as some other forms of development as prescribed under s.25 of the Act. The District Council will retain responsibility for processing non-state-significant permit applications. The Local Government Act 2003 also makes District Councils (and Municipalities) responsible for processing all building permit applications.

Other Ministries such as those with responsibilities for Environment, Agro-Industry and Fisheries, Public Infrastructure and Public Utilities, as well as the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands will also have an important role to play in the Scheme’s implementation.

1.7 **Planning Policy Guidance**

In this context it should be noted that the Planning and Development Act 2004 also makes provision for the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) which shall prevail to the extent of any inconsistency, over a development plan. PPG therefore has the status of state (national) planning policy and will be a material consideration in assessing applications for building and land use permits.

The first PPG issued covers Design Guidance which replaces the Planning Guidelines on Residential and Industrial Development and Coastal Zone Development which were previously bound into the Outline Planning Schemes.

It should be understood however that the granting of a building and land use permit by a permit authority does not override obligations under any other legislation relating to the proposal or its site.

1.8 **Structure of this Outline Planning Scheme**

The Outline Planning Scheme is in two parts:

- The **Text** section which includes:
  - The **Development Context** for the Scheme which outlines key development trends, constraints, issues and objectives
The Policies and Proposals, which are written in bold, followed by their reasoned justification. The policies are grouped together according to particular subject matter or by land use type; and

The Map section which includes:

- The Development Strategy Map, covering major proposals for the whole of the District
- The Development Management Map, which shows settlements and zones where development is likely to be permitted and other areas where there are various constraints to development, and
- Inset Maps in this District:
  - SSR Airport Safeguarding Area Restrictions
  - Seizième Mille/ Midlands

*If there are any discrepancies or omissions between the Maps and the text of the Policies and Proposals, then the provisions of the Policies and Proposals should prevail.*
2 Development Context

2.1 National Development Trends

The National Development Strategy (NDS) was approved by Government in March 2003. The NDS comprises a range of policies for nationally significant development and provides guidance for developing residential, tourism, a range of employment uses and major transport and infrastructure proposals. The NDS also provides guidance on where land should be protected or where caution should be exercised when determining if strategic development should go ahead. It covers the period up to 2020.

The NDS identified the following broad trends:

- Major changes in primary and secondary sectors of the economy due to rationalisation in the sugar and textile industries, in response to pressures from global competition and trade liberalisation;
- Significant land use changes resulting from a variety of Government-inspired and sophisticated land conversion and land redistribution schemes, including the 1:2 and 1:3 Sugar Industry Efficiency Act (SIE) deals, the related Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) and Sugar Investment Trust (SIT) schemes;
- Growing demand for quality residential morcellements (sub-divisions) involving provision of higher standards of amenity and the adoption of cahier des charges, as consumers demand better environments and quality of life;
- More complex tourism projects as the Mauritian resort market continues to evolve and respond to global trends for increasingly specialised tourism products, for example, Integrated Resort Schemes (IRS) which may include housing, golf courses and/or marina facilities, on attractive and sensitive coastal sites;
- Government-led diversification into knowledge-driven industries such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT)/High Tech/Research and Development (R&D) which usually include well-landscaped business parks, often with waterside settings or features and new forms of building technologies to attract multi-national organisations and regional headquarters offices; and
- Major expansion of the SSR International Airport at Plaisance.

2.2 District Development Characteristics – Grand Port

2.2.1 Land Use, Population and Housing

The population of Grand Port District increased by nearly 10% from around 99,000 in 1990 to 109,000 in 2000; the actual increase in population was just under 10,000. This rate of growth was below the national and ‘all
District' growth rates for the same period (see Table 2.1). The numbers of households and housing units increased by 26% and 31% respectively over the same period – again lower than the national rates. Households and housing units increased faster than population due to decreasing household size, reduced household/housing unit ratios and increases in the number of unoccupied dwellings. Vacancy rates are lower than those prevailing nationally and in other Districts.

**Table 2.1 Population and Housing Trends, Grand Port 1990-2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Annual Growth Rates (AGR) 1990-2000</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Grand Port</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>99,104</td>
<td>109,086</td>
<td>9,982</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>21,825</td>
<td>27,476</td>
<td>5,651</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
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<td>Total housing units</td>
<td>19,991</td>
<td>26,114</td>
<td>6,123</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. Some changes have been made to NDS population and housing data to ensure consistency with the District areas envisaged under The Local Government Act 2003.

Source: 1990 and 2000 Censuses, CSO.

**Table 2.2** shows relatively little variation in growth rates of population and housing units throughout the District – no areas are growing significantly faster or slower than others – indicating the absence of any major new employment generators in recent years. There are two major population centres in the District – Mahebourg and Rose Belle; both are designated as growth zones in the NDS.
Table 2.2 Sub-Areas: Population and Housing Trends, 1990-2000

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<tr>
<td>L’Escalier/ Riv. du Poste/ Mare Tabac/ Trois Boutiques</td>
<td>16,410</td>
<td>18,861</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>3,306</td>
<td>4,324</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mare D’Albert/ Plaine Magnien</td>
<td>13,433</td>
<td>14,102</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2,581</td>
<td>3,244</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3%</td>
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<td>Rose Belle/ New Grove/ Union Park/ Nouvelle France</td>
<td>33,663</td>
<td>37,494</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6,510</td>
<td>8,921</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2%</td>
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<td>Petit Bel Air/ Grand Bel Air/ Mahebourg/ Beau Vallon</td>
<td>22,849</td>
<td>24,509</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4,973</td>
<td>6,401</td>
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<td>2.6%</td>
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<td>Quatre Soeurs/Grand Sable/ Bambous Virieux/ Bois des Amourettes/ Old Grand Port/ Riviere Des Creoles</td>
<td>12,749</td>
<td>14,120</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2,621</td>
<td>3,224</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Port District</td>
<td>99,104</td>
<td>109,086</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>19,991</td>
<td>26,114</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NB. 1990-2000 comparisons are not exact due to changes in Enumeration District boundaries.
Source: 1990 and 2000 Censuses, CSO.

2.2.2 Employment and Economic Activity

Just under 40% (43,200) of the population of Grand Port are employed. The unemployment rate (10.3%) is one of the highest in the country and is significantly higher than the overall rate for rural areas (9.2%). Table 2.3 and Figure 2.1 show the distribution of employment (i.e. workplaces) in Grand Port District by sector and make comparisons to the national and all-District distributions.

The most notable feature of the distribution of jobs in Grand Port District is the high proportion of those involved in transportation although this is unsurprising as the island’s international airport is located in this District. Virtually all other sectors apart from agriculture are under-represented. Allied to the higher unemployment rate, alternative sources of employment to offset the decline in the sugar industry have been difficult to attract – both manufacturing and tourism are under-represented relative to other Districts. This conclusion is partly corroborated by the fact that Grand Port, despite having one of the rural Districts’ highest populations, has attracted only 7% of non-residential floorspace built on the island over the last 8 years – the lowest proportion of all Districts apart from Savanne which has a much lower population. A Business Park site for BPML is under construction at Rose Belle south of the J. Nehru Hospital adjacent to the M1 Motorway.
Grand Port District still contains large amounts of land under sugar cane. The land around St Hubert, Riche en Eau, Mare D’Albert and L’Escalier is identified as highly suitable to moderately suitable agricultural land by MSIRI. Sugar factories in the District include Mon Tresor Mon Desert, Rose Belle, Riche en Eau and Ferney; however Rose Belle is now closed and others may close in the next few years as part of the rationalisation of milling in the sugar industry. Tea was also grown around Mount Pauline, Nouvelle France and Pont Colville, but this has proved no longer viable.

Sand mining has been brought to a close in the lagoon and those communities previously involved in mining and fishing activities along the coast, particularly Bambous Virieux, Bois des Amourettes, Pointe D’Esny are exploring new opportunities to sustain their economic base.

Hotel development has clustered around Blue Bay on the southern coast and near Mahebourg - primarily those sections of the coastline with sandy beaches. The open rocky coast and lack of extensive sandy beaches has limited tourism development in the District. Two new Tourism Zones were identified in the Tourism Development Plan, the Mahebourg Tourism Zone and the South Coast Heritage Zone. Both zones promote specialised tourism growth building on conservation opportunities.

Table 2.3 Employment Structure, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Sector</th>
<th>Grand Port*</th>
<th>Mauritius</th>
<th>All Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agric./ For. / Fishing</td>
<td>8,091</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining/ Manufacturing</td>
<td>10,084</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction (incl. EGW)</td>
<td>2,976</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>3,131</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels/ Restaurants</td>
<td>1,586</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>3,886</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance/ Business</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PublicAdmin./Defence</td>
<td>1,966</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Education</td>
<td>3,228</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,722</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data refer to the old District of Grand Port and thus exclude Quatre Soeurs and Marie Jeanne as it was not possible to include them; their exclusion is unlikely to affect the results. Source: Derived from 2000 Census.
Figure 2.1 Employment (Workplaces) Structure,

Like many Districts Grand Port is a net exporter of employed labour – net commuting is equivalent to 14% of the resident labour force –despite its distance from the conurbation. This is partly explained by the location of the M1 motorway which links the airport to the capital; accessibility to the conurbation from Rose Belle for instance, is much better than for settlements in other Districts which geographically appear closer. The District-wide balance however masks substantial variations: Plaine Magnien is a net importer of jobs due to airport activities and for this reason has been identified as a Special Use Zone in the NDS. The wide range of administrative and commercial functions in Mahebourg enables it to maintain an approximate equilibrium between labour and jobs. In contrast, net commuting rates from the peripheral parts of the District are substantial (refer Table 2.4).
Table 2.4 Commuting Levels by Sub-Area, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT SUB-AREAS</th>
<th>Resident Workers</th>
<th>Workplaces / Jobs</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Net Commuting Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escalier/ Riv du Poste/ Mare Tabac/ Trois Boutiques</td>
<td>7390</td>
<td>4,646</td>
<td>-2,744</td>
<td>-37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mare D’Albert/ Plaine Magnien</td>
<td>5,479</td>
<td>8,190</td>
<td>2,711</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Belle/ New Grove / Union Park/Nouvelle France</td>
<td>15,103</td>
<td>12,115</td>
<td>-2,988</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petit Bel Air/ Grand Bel Air/ Mahebourg/ Beau Vallon</td>
<td>9,681</td>
<td>8,985</td>
<td>-696</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QuatreSoeurs/Grand Sable/BambousVirieux/Bois des Amourettes/Old Grand Port/ Riviere Des Creoles</td>
<td>5,508</td>
<td>3,296</td>
<td>-2,212</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43,161</td>
<td>37,232</td>
<td>-5,929</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1990 and 2000 Censuses, CSO.

2.2.3 Environment

Grand Port District has extensive coastal frontage along the east and southern coasts of Mauritius extending from Pointe aux Feuilles on its north-eastern boundary to Butte aux Sables on its southern boundary. The Bambous Mountains and the Creole Mountains run along the northern boundary of the District and provide a dramatic and scenic natural backdrop to many of the rural and coastal villages in southern Mauritius. The upper portions of these mountain ranges and their peaks are protected Mountain Reserves under the Forest and Reserves Act.

A series of rivers emanate from the Bambous and Creole Mountain Ranges with the River Nyon and River Champagne converging to enter the lagoon at Ferney; River des Creoles at Riviere des Creoles and River Tabac and River du Poste converge to enter the lagoon near Butte aux Sables. The largest river in the District - River La Chaux - passes through Mahebourg before entering the lagoon. All rivers are important surface water resources for agriculture and, in part, for District potable water supplies. Land immediately adjoining these rivers and other rivulets are legally protected from most forms of development.

Islets and islands within and outside the lagoon are also within the boundaries of Grand Port District. In 2004 eight islands/islets around
Mauritius were declared a National Park under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1993. Within Grand Port District these include Ilot Flamants, Ile aux Oiseaux, Ile aux Fous, Ile aux Fouquets, Ilot Vacoas and part of Ile de la Passe; part of the latter is also a National Monument under the National Monuments Act, 1985. Ile aux Aigrettes, Ile Marianne and Rocher des Oiseaux are protected Nature Reserves with Ile aux Aigrettes the focus of Government and Mauritian Wildlife Trust efforts to restore the indigenous habitat to assist in the preservation of rare and endangered flora and fauna (including the pink pigeon and kestrel). The Marine Park at Blue Bay is protected under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 1998 and aims to conserve nationally-important marine habitat.

The coastline is an important District asset yet it is also vulnerable to development pressures, containing a number of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) including mangroves, wetlands, the coral reef and undeveloped islets and coastline. Preservation of wetlands and mangroves is an increasingly significant issue particularly with some infilling of wetlands and removal of mangroves for residential development and agriculture raising concerns over decreasing water quality within the lagoon.

2.2.4 Highways and Transport

Parts of the District are well linked to the conurbation and Port Louis via the M1 Motorway and the A10 Trunk Road. The Motorway also provides the major access route to the SSR International Airport at Plaisance. The parallel A10 forms the main development spine through Nouvelle France and Rose Belle to Plaine Magnien and on to Mahebourg. The road is congested through the main settlements at peak periods with local traffic but through traffic is able to use the Motorway.

The South Eastern Highway section from Plaine Magnien to Ferney will link the Airport towards tourist and potential development and regeneration centres in the east and north of the island.

The other main links from the District are the coastal roads to the north along the east coast towards Flacq (B28) and to the west along the south coast via Souillac/Surinam to Black River District (B8/A9/B9). Other villages and settlements in the District are served by a somewhat fragmented network of B-class roads. The A9 provides a connection between the Motorway at Nouvelle France and the south west and a new link has recently been constructed from the M1 to L’Escalier.

The SSR International Airport at Plaisance is the only airport on the Island and the main entry and exit point for business visitors, tourists and residents. The airport is a major employment centre and significant industrial and airport-related activities have developed in the surrounding area. It is proposed to expand and upgrade the airport and the Master Plan’s (2004)
layout offers extra development potential, with both additional capacity provided by a second runway north of the existing one and additional land area allowing a new dedicated passenger terminal when current facilities reach saturation.

### 2.2.5 Infrastructure and Utilities

Potable water for the District is obtained from a combination of surface and ground water sources. Surface water is imported from the Piton du Milieu reservoir and water treatment works and is also obtained from a river intake near to Beau Climat on the Riviere du Poste. As for most parts of Mauritius a substantial volume of the water consumed in the District is obtained from groundwater sources (over 50%). Water availability during the dry season drops significantly as the river flows reduce and groundwater levels drop and despite recent improvements, there is little surplus capacity. The CWA is currently looking into the possibility of utilising the volume of water that is currently lost to the sea after passing through the hydro-electric power generation turbines.

The Diamamouve dam has been constructed to supply water for potable uses and two new dam sites are under consideration at La Flora and Astroea. The Water Resources Unit/Ministry of Public Utilities (WRU/MPU) has advised that one of the above dams or the one proposed at Chamarel will be needed in the near future to secure the water supply situation in the south of Mauritius.

There are several hydro-electric power generation facilities in the District; three operated by CEB and a privately-operated station. The former are located at Champagne, Eau Bleue and Ferney and the latter at Riche en Eau. The Eau Bleue Reservoir in the north of the District provides water storage for the adjacent power station and also provides a regulating flow down the river. In addition to the hydro schemes there are two privately-operated sugar estate power stations that produce power from bagasse when this fuel is available; these stations are located at Riche en Eau and Mon Tresor Mon Desert.

Power distribution in the District is being significantly improved and new 66kV rated transmission cables are being erected that will connect with the existing 66kV lines at Champagne and Combo providing a robust ring main through the District.

There are no sewerage systems or planned provision to serve any of the settlements in the District. The Grand Port District contains the only managed solid waste disposal site in Mauritius at Mare Chicose. This site was originally intended to take just 20% of the nation’s waste but has in fact been receiving it all. Recent studies have indicated that the facility may be expanded in the future in order to extend its life-span.
2.2.6 Summary of Development Constraints, Opportunities and Issues

Grand Port District continues to consolidate its economic base. By 2020 it is projected that there will be a requirement for 16,700 more dwellings to accommodate the population increase and changes in household structure. With the continued rationalisation of facilities in the sugar industry, a potential tapering off of the textile industry and growth of the tourism sector, employment is likely to continue to move out of agriculture and traditional industries to the service sector (including some offices and ICT and tourism-related developments) and perhaps to workshops and SMEs (Small and Medium- Sized Enterprises) and warehousing and distribution given the proposed expansion of the airport and the construction of the South Eastern Highway from Plaine Magnien.

Commuting northwards to the conurbation is likely to increase given the growth of Cybercity, the Réduit/University/Highlands cluster and continued retail and office expansion along with proposed improvements to highways networks and the potential introduction of an alternative mode of transport (AMT) linking Port Louis to Curepipe. Employment opportunities are also expected to improve in the Plaine Magnien/SSRIA Special Use Zone as airport operations expand over the planning period. Proposals for integrated resorts and some increase in tourism establishments should also generate more employment towards the Tourism Zones. Planning to sustain the continued vitality of Rose Belle and Mahebourg is important to consolidate their roles as the principal commercial and service centres in the area.

The South Eastern Highway is proposed to link the airport towards the Eastern Tourism Zone: in the long term, if access to existing settlements is carefully planned, it could stimulate new development in Riche en Eau, Cent Gaulettes/St Hubert, Grand Bel Air, Riviere des Creoles and Ferney.

Development pressures over the plan period on the cluster of settlements along the A10 - Rose Belle, New Grove and Mare D’Albert will place further traffic demands on this road and any growth will require careful management to ensure the road does not become congested. These settlements together with Nouvelle France and Pont Colville, given their strategic locational advantage to the Port Louis - Plaines Wilhems conurbation are likely to continue experiencing pressures for growth.

The District is highly dependant upon groundwater sources and the river intake on the Riviere du Poste for its water supply and consequently it is important that any developments recognise the need to protect these sources from pollution. The possibility of the construction of dams to the east of Rose Belle needs to be considered when looking at allowing development, particularly industrial development, in the watershed for the River La Chaux. The watersheds for other dams under consideration are in more mountainous and undeveloped areas, which are more protected;
however it remains important that such areas are safeguarded from most forms of major development.

The new high voltage power transmission lines through the east and south of the District together with existing lines along the north, should allow for the economic provision of electricity to most settlements. The CEB has advised that if development of Pavillon du Grand Port area proceeds then it might be an appropriate site for a new power station as the deep water access would enable coal to be imported directly to the site.

The existence of the waste disposal site at Mare Chicose will continue to be a constraint to certain types of development nearby, but the site does offer an opportunity to cluster other bad-neighbour developments to make optimum use of the existing buffer zone and infrastructure.

2.2.7 The Vision for Grand Port District

The vision for Grand Port District needs to look ahead to address the planning needs of the key District clusters – the Rural Regeneration Zone centred on Rose Belle/New Grove, the Special Use Zone related to the airport at Plaine Magnien and the Mahebourg Tourism Zone. Clustering new development to link with these settlements so that upgraded public infrastructure and transport services can be provided more efficiently is essential to sustain economic growth in the District.

Some flexibility is also required to accommodate likely future needs such as large scale/ large floorplate factories and industrial development as well as storage, warehousing and distribution associated with the expansion of the SSR airport and improved strategic highway links which should provide better access between the airport and the Port Louis-Plaines Wilhems conurbation and, via the South Eastern Highway, the east of the island. Potential for small and medium sized enterprises, including light industry workshops should also be accommodated. Ensuring infrastructure, particularly water treatment and electricity, is available to support tourism and other employment and residential demands is a pre-requisite.

With increasing global competition in the tourism market and innovative responses required by the Mauritian tourism industry to maintain its well-earned competitive edge, some flexibility will also be required in accommodating tourism developments generally in areas that are the most environmentally sensitive. Balancing the needs of the tourism industry with the protection of sensitive coastal and inland environments should be an important component of the revised Scheme. Residential developments in coastal locations will need to reflect more sophisticated consumer and Government concerns particularly with regard to ensuring density is commensurate with the sensitivity of the site, infrastructure (particularly
sewerage) is strictly controlled and public access to beaches and the coast is maintained and enhanced.

Acknowledging the important links from the District to the conurbation and Port Louis and the continued growth of the Tourism Zones including the South Coast Heritage Zone as well as the Eastern Tourism Zone, road improvements and strengthened public transport links will be required; for those rural communities undergoing transition away from sugar agriculture, provision of improved access to alternative employment bases (some of which may be located out of the District) should be an important consideration.

Through the creation of a development strategy and management framework this Scheme should aim to show how land can be developed whilst respecting and enhancing the amenity and quality of life of the area and ensuring that development evolves in a sustainable and integrated way. Pressures for development will need to be balanced with sustaining local economies and the natural character and ambience of the area, so that new opportunities for existing communities, tourist resorts and newly located or relocated businesses and industries are created.

By providing planning guidance on future action areas and priorities for development, the Scheme can also assist in focusing initiatives which promote socio-economic development in accordance with Government and private sector objectives and which fosters effective public-private and community partnerships.

2.3 District Development Characteristics - Savanne

2.3.1 Land Use, Population and Housing

The population of Savanne District increased by around 10% from around 59,000 in 1990 to 65,000 in 2000 – slightly lower than the national and rural area growth rates for the same period (see Table 2.5). Households and the number of housing units increased by 26% and 34% respectively over the same period – virtually the same as the national rates. Households and housing units increased faster than population due to decreasing household size, reduced household/housing unit ratios and increases in the number of unoccupied dwellings. Vacancy rates are lower than those prevailing nationally and in other Districts.
Table 2.5 Population and Housing Trends, Savanne 1990-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Savanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>56,181</td>
<td>60,815</td>
<td>4,634</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>12,584</td>
<td>15,673</td>
<td>3,089</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total housing units</td>
<td>11,300</td>
<td>14,900</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>n a</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. Some changes have been made to NDS population and housing data to ensure consistency with the District areas envisaged under The Local Government Act 2003. Source: 1990 and 2000 Censuses, CSO.

Surinam was the only other area to exhibit above average growth. The major population centre is Chemin Grenier (around 12,000 people) which is an NDS designated Rural Regeneration Zone. The linked settlements of Surinam and Souillac (combined population around 14,000) are also a focus within the South Coast Heritage Tourism Zone.

Table 2.6 Sub-Areas: Population and Housing Trends, 1990-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT SUB-AREAS</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Housing Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamouny/ Chemin Grenier</td>
<td>14,838</td>
<td>16,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinam</td>
<td>8,057</td>
<td>9,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souillac/ St Aubin/ R. des Anguilles</td>
<td>14,591</td>
<td>14,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benares/ Camp Diable/ L'Escalier</td>
<td>6,781</td>
<td>6,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britannia/ Grand Bois/ Bois Cheri</td>
<td>11,914</td>
<td>13,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savanne District</td>
<td>56,181</td>
<td>60,815</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. 1990-2000 comparisons are not exact due to changes in Enumeration District boundaries. Source: 1990 and 2000 Censuses, CSO.
2.3.2 Employment and Economic Activity

Just under 42% (27,200) of the population of Savanne are employed. The unemployment rate (9.5%) is slightly higher than the overall rate for rural areas (9.2%). Table 2.7 and Figure 2.2 show the distribution of employment (i.e. workplaces) in Savanne by sector and make comparisons to the national and all-District distributions.

Table 2.7 Employment Structure, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Sector</th>
<th>Savanne District*</th>
<th>Mauritius</th>
<th>All Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agric./ For. / Fishing</td>
<td>6,656</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining/ Manufacturing</td>
<td>8,455</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction (incl. EGW)</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>1,528</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels/ Restaurants</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance/ Business</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin./ Defence</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/ Education</td>
<td>1,429</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,419</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data refer to the old District of Savanne and thus include Baie du Cap and Bel Ombre as it was not possible to exclude them; their inclusion is unlikely to affect the results. Source: Derived from 2000 Census.

In comparison to other Districts, Savanne has greater proportions of employment in agriculture and manufacturing. All other sectors are under-represented, particularly hotels and restaurants (a proxy for the tourism sector) which constitute under 1% of the total number of jobs in the District. This pattern reflects the primarily rural and agricultural character of the District.

Savanne District still contains large amounts of land under sugar cane. The land around Britannia, Rivière des Anguilles, St Felix, Surinam, Souillac and Chemin Grenier is classed as highly suitable to moderately suitable agricultural land by MSIRI. Sugar factories that operated in the District include Britannia, Savannah, St Aubin and St Felix: as part of the rationalisation of milling in the sugar industry, the St Felix sugar mill is to close and the milling operation transferred. Tea was also grown around Mount Blanc and Bois Cheri: however only the Bois Cheri estate is still in production and is now the last remaining operating tea factory on the island. Sand mining has now ceased in the lagoon and traditional fishing communities along the coast, particularly Surinam and Souillac, are exploring new opportunities to provide a stable economic base.
Given the extensive coastal frontage, relatively few new hotel developments have occurred in the District although a Government-approved hotel cluster is under preparation in Pointe aux Roches near the St Felix sugar mill. Two designated Tourism Zones in the District were identified in the Tourism Development Plan, 2000: the South Coast Heritage Zone and the South West Natural Zone: both Zones promote specialised tourism growth.

**Figure 2.2 Employment (Workplaces) Structure, Savanne 2000**

Source: Derived from 2000 Census.

Over the last 8 years, only 6% of new non-residential floorspace has been constructed in Savanne – the lowest proportion of any District corroborated by the absence of any recently constructed major development projects.

This lack of major employment generators is reflected in the high level of out-commuting – almost 20% of resident workers are employed outside the District with the SSR International Airport being one of the major attractors. The majority of commuters however work in the conurbation. All sub-zones except Souillac/ St. Aubin/ Riviere des Anguilles experience out-commuting with the highest rate being found in Benares/ Camp Diable which is nearest the airport (see Table 2.8).
Table 2.8 Commuting Levels by Sub-Area, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT SUB-AREAS</th>
<th>Resident Workers</th>
<th>Workplaces / Jobs</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Net Commuting Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamouny/ Chemin Grenier</td>
<td>6,683</td>
<td>4,542</td>
<td>-2,141</td>
<td>-32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinam</td>
<td>4,147</td>
<td>2,859</td>
<td>-1,288</td>
<td>-31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souillac/ St Aubin/ R. des Anguilles</td>
<td>6,318</td>
<td>6,958</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benares/ Camp Diable/ l'Escalier</td>
<td>2,522</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>-1,002</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britannia/ Grand Bois/ Bois Cheri</td>
<td>5,817</td>
<td>4,819</td>
<td>-998</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savanne District</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,487</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,698</strong></td>
<td><strong>-4,789</strong></td>
<td><strong>-19%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1990 and 2000 Censuses, CSO.

2.3.3 Environment

Savanne District has extensive coastal frontage along the southern coast of Mauritius extending from Butte aux Sables on its south-eastern boundary to Beau Champ on its south–western boundary. The Savanne Mountains forming part of the Black River Gorges National Park run through the District and form part of the northern boundary providing a dramatic and scenic natural backdrop to many of the rural and coastal villages in the south. The upper reaches of these mountain ranges and their peaks are protected Mountain Reserves under the Forest and Reserves Act or form part of the National Park.

A series of rivers emanating from the Savanne Mountain Ranges run throughout the District with the key rivers being Riviere du Poste, Riviere St Amand, Riviere Dragon, Riviere des Anguilles, Riviere Bain des Negresses, Riviere Savanne, Riviere Patates, Riviere des Galets and Riviere Jacotet on the western boundary of the District. Settlements have developed along these major rivers with Surinam and Souillac being the largest. These settlements had strong links with the fishing industry with Riviere Savanne entrance providing a safe landing place for fishermen as well as direct access to the Indian Ocean via the opening through the lagoon and reef to the open sea. All rivers are important surface water resources for agriculture and, in part, for District potable water supplies. Land adjoining these rivers and other rivulets are legally protected from most forms of development.

In 1993 a series of protected Mountain Reserves was consolidated into the Black River Gorges National Park and proclaimed under the National Parks
and Wildlife Act 1993. Another Nature Reserve exists in the District - Bois Sec which is protected under the Forest and Reserves Act.

Former volcanic activity has resulted in a series of crater lakes in the upper highlands of the District including Bassin Blanc and the internationally-important Grand Bassin which is a Hindu religious shrine and pilgrimage site (Maha Shivaratri).

Long stretches of the southern coast consist of sandy beaches with the sections near Pointe Riambel and Pointe aux Roches declared public beaches under the Local Government Act. The coastline is an important District asset yet it is also vulnerable to development pressures, containing a number of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) including mangroves, wetlands, the coral reef and undeveloped islets and coastline. Preservation of wetlands is an increasingly significant issue in the country particularly with some infilling of wetlands for residential development and agriculture raising concerns over decreasing water quality within the lagoon.

2.3.4 Highways and Transport

Primary access to the main centres in the District from Port Louis and the conurbation is via the A9 highway from a junction on the M1 Motorway at Nouvelle France. The District is also linked via coastal roads to the Airport and Grand Port to the east (B8) and to Black River to the west (B9).

The main settlements within the District – Souillac, Surinam, Chemin Grenier and Riviere des Anguilles – are accessed by this network of A and B class roads. The rural nature of the District is reflected in the fragmented road network: many small inland settlements stretching along the A9 and B88 have extensive ribbon development. Given the high levels of commuting from some rural settlements and the decline in the sugar industry, commuting out of the District is likely to continue: some localised highway re-alignments and public transport improvements will be required over the Planning Scheme period.

2.3.5 Infrastructure and Utilities

Potable water for the District is obtained from a combination of surface and ground water sources. Surface water is imported from the Piton du Milieu reservoir and water treatment works and is also obtained from several river intakes. As for most parts of Mauritius a substantial volume of the water consumed in the District is obtained from various borehole and spring groundwater sources (over 50%). Water availability during the dry season drops significantly as the river flows reduce and groundwater levels drop and despite recent improvements, there is little surplus capacity.
Although shortage of water can be experienced during dry seasons the distribution of available water is reasonably robust, with large diameter pipes (200mm to 350mm diameter) feeding from the La Flora filters to Souillac and from the Mont Blanc filters through Chemin Grenier and along the coast to Baie du Cap. A potential dam site has been identified in the extreme west of the District to supply water for potable uses (Chamarel). The WRU/MPU has advised that either this dam or one in Grand Port will be needed in the near future to secure the water supply situation in the south of Mauritius.

There are no existing sewerage systems in any of the urban areas in the District and no imminent plans to provide any. Solid waste is disposed in the Mare Chicose landfill site.

There are two hydro-electric power generation facilities in the District; one at Cascade Cecile which is operated by the Central Electricity Board (CEB) and a privately-operated station at Bois Cheri. In addition to the hydro schemes there are two existing privately-operated sugar estate power stations and one more under construction. The power station at Savannah only produces power when bagasse is available whilst the existing plant at St Aubin uses coal to produce power throughout the year. The new power station, also on the St Aubin estate, will produce power from coal. The CEB is requesting proposals for the provision of new power generation facilities and it has been suggested that some may be received in the future to construct new stations on the Savannah and St Felix sugar estates.

The existence of the power station at St Aubin meant that there was an existing 66kV power transmission line running through the District. However, this line went directly north and was of little benefit to the District itself. The CEB is currently constructing a new 66kV power line to connect St Aubin to the existing network in the east of Mauritius and there are proposals to erect another line in the near future, between Combo and Le Morne to provide reliable power to all the developments that are envisaged along the south coast. The main fibre optic communications cable runs offshore at Bay Jacotet and runs close to Chemin Grenier.

2.3.6 Summary of Development Constraints, Opportunities and Issues

Savanne District is facing some significant challenges to sustain its economic base. It is a rural District that is still heavily reliant on the agricultural sector and to a lesser extent manufacturing, perhaps more than any other District in the country. By 2020 it is projected that there will be a requirement for 10,200 more dwellings to accommodate the population increase and changes in household structure. However the District is not well placed with respect to proximity to major centres of economic growth, where new employment opportunities may be expected, other than the SSRIA.
With the continued rationalisation of facilities in the sugar industry and a potential tapering off in the textile industry, employment is likely to continue to move out of agriculture and traditional industries, though it is by no means obvious (other than in the tourism sector and perhaps in workshops and SMEs -Small and Medium- Sized Enterprises) where new employment attractions could be provided to provide a multi-sector basis for future growth. Thus the District is particularly vulnerable to the significant pressures of rural-urban migration especially amongst younger age groups, net out-commuting and eventual rural depopulation and economic decline which have been generally experienced under similar circumstances elsewhere.

Commuting northwards to the conurbation is thus likely to continue given the above scenario: some commuting eastwards is also likely to increase with potential Airport expansion and related industrial growth associated with the South Eastern Highway /Special Use Zone at Plaine Magnien/ Plaisance. Savanne District is thus likely to continue to be an exporter of local labour.

However proposals for integrated resorts and some increase in tourism establishments are likely to generate more employment towards the South Coast Heritage Zone especially around St Felix/ Pointe aux Roches. Planning to sustain the continued vitality of Surinam/ Souillac, Chemin Grenier/ Chamouny and Riviere des Anguilles should therefore become increasingly important to consolidate their roles as the District’s main commercial centres within Savanne’s rural and agricultural hinterland.

The Black River Gorges National Park which straddles part of the District is an important asset and adds to the rural environment. The protection of the National Park and adjoining Nature Reserves, Mountain Reserves and Privately-owned Mountain Reserves is vital if the natural and open environment is to remain – particularly for the tourism industry – especially as and when land (and the landscape) is impacted by reductions in sugar production. Co-ordination of the Reserves could be improved if the boundaries of the National Park were extended.

Ribbon development is adding to localised traffic congestion in Surinam/ Souillac, Riviere des Anguilles, Chemin Grenier and the Bois Cheri area exacerbating already long commuting journey times and localised road safety problems.

The District is highly dependant upon groundwater sources and the river intakes for its water supply and consequently it is important that any developments recognise the need to protect these sources from pollution. The possibility of the construction of a dam at Chamarel is unlikely to be a
constraint to development as the watershed for the dam is in a mountainous and undeveloped area.

The new high voltage power transmission lines through the south of the District should allow for the economic provision of electricity to most settlements and any future major growth along the coast. Generally the construction and operation of power stations is considered a constraint to nearby development as these facilities are considered to be bad-neighbour industries on account of their potential adverse environmental and safety impacts: buffer zones are therefore normally established over time to protect sensitive uses.

However in this District, the sparse population and development patterns are unlikely to be adversely affected by proposals for new power station developments which can be sited in relatively isolated locations.

The existence of the fibre optic communications in the vicinity of Chemin Grenier may offer opportunities for the development of certain high-tech computer-based industries or call-centre businesses in the area.

2.3.7 The Vision for Savanne District

The vision for Savanne District needs to look ahead to address the planning needs of the key District settlements and the transition from sugar to other sectors of employment. The Rural Regeneration Zone centred on Chemin Grenier/Chamouny, the South Coast Heritage Zone centred on Surinam/Souillac, as well as important smaller settlements such as Riviere des Anguilles and Bois Cheri should be the primary focus. Clustering new development and provision of public sector interventions to sustain local growth so that upgraded public infrastructure can be provided more efficiently is likely to be an essential ingredient to sustain the economic vitality of the District.

Some flexibility is also required to accommodate likely future employment uses such as SMEs and smaller factories. However Government assistance in attracting alternative employment investments is likely to be required through unlocking site potential, provision of serviced land, starter units or through land swaps in order to counter-balance net outflow of labour and potentially, pockets of rural decline.

Acknowledging the important links from the District to the conurbation and Port Louis and the continued growth of the Tourism Zones including the South Coast Heritage Zone, some local road improvements and strengthened public transport links will be required; for those rural communities undergoing transition away from sugar agriculture, provision of improved transportation services and access to alternative employment
bases (some of which may be located out of the District) should be an important consideration.

In this regard localised traffic management improvements to reduce traffic congestion in rural settlements on the A9, B88 and B8 would be beneficial in easing commuting journey times northwards towards the conurbation and Port Louis and eastwards to the SSR International Airport/ Plaine Magnien warehouse and distribution cluster. Ensuring infrastructure particularly water treatment and electricity is available to support tourism and other employment and residential demands is also needed.

With increasing global competition in the tourism market and innovative responses required by the Mauritian tourism industry to maintain its well-earned competitive edge, some flexibility will also be required in accommodating tourism developments which focus on the Tourism Zones generally in areas that are the most environmentally sensitive. Balancing the needs of the tourism industry with the protection of sensitive coastal and inland environments should be an important component of the revised Scheme.

Residential developments in coastal locations will need to reflect more sophisticated consumer and Government concerns particularly with regard to ensuring density is commensurate with the sensitivity of the site, infrastructure (particularly sewerage) is strictly controlled and monitored and public access to beaches and the coast is maintained and enhanced.

Through the creation of a development strategy and management framework this Scheme should aim to show how development opportunities can be harnessed whilst respecting and enhancing the amenity and quality of life of the area and ensuring that development evolves in a sustainable and integrated way. Pressures for development on the coast will need to be balanced with sustaining local economies and the natural character and ambience of the area, so that new opportunities for existing communities, tourist resorts and newly located or relocated businesses and industries are created.

By providing planning guidance on future action areas and priorities for development, the Scheme can also assist in focusing initiatives that promote socio-economic development in accordance with Government and private sector objectives and that fosters effective public-private and community partnerships.
3 Strategic Development Principles and Objectives

3.1 Approach

This Scheme represents a major departure from previous plans which broadly advocated a prescriptive approach to development planning during a period of relative economic stability. By providing detailed forecasts for future land uses and areas, the previous Scheme then allocated uses to specific sites, in an attempt to manage and control development.

This approach is no longer appropriate given the pace of economic and related land use changes that are now taking place in Mauritius and which are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. In addition the previous prescriptive method of planning has led to large areas of land within zones designated for development or within settlement boundaries remaining undeveloped, largely as a result of land ownership complexities, market pressures for different sites and conflicting priorities for land development amongst some Government Ministries and Agencies.

As a consequence a more flexible and responsive development management and control system is needed to facilitate much-needed growth and help sustain the country’s competitiveness on the world stage. The dynamic economic shifts need to find expression in the land use planning system both at the national and at the local levels.

3.2 Key Development Principles and Objectives

Synthesizing the key development principles contained in the NDS and building on the extensive consultation processes adopted, this Scheme lays the foundation for a more flexible and responsive pattern of land use planning by promoting the following key action-oriented goals and objectives:

3.2.1 Goals

- The efficient development and sustainable use of land which allows for the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural and man-made assets
- A dynamic and flexible approach to land development which facilitates coordination, integration and inclusivity for all stakeholders.
3.2.2 Key Objectives

- **Clustering new development** in and around existing settlements and especially identified growth zones, by making more efficient use of existing facilities and services and strengthening the economic and social linkages between them; clustering homes, jobs and leisure opportunities also assists in alleviating expensive public infrastructure costs; and improves the integration of land use and transport including reducing dependency on the private car (especially for journeys to work);

- **Using a sequential approach** to site development which supports the clustering principle, by seeking to ensure that sites and land parcels in and around already built-up areas and defined settlement boundaries have been looked at before trying to convert more valuable agricultural land or developing quality landscape and environmentally-sensitive ‘greenfield’ sites;

- **Stimulating development which contributes to a sustainable future** by recognising that well-designed schemes can contribute to employment creation and environmental management and by involving key stakeholders in development implementation, operation and maintenance; and

- **Enhancing the design quality and image** of new developments by carefully considering the impact the proposals are likely to have on their surroundings and on the existing transport and utilities networks and determining whether they are making the most appropriate use of the site.

3.3 A New Approach - Revised Settlement Boundaries

Because of the new planning approach laid down in the National Development Strategy that responds to the economic shifts and challenges now taking place in Mauritius, this revised Scheme proposes a more flexible and pro-active planning vocabulary.

Under the new approach a range of criteria for project acceptability is now proposed with the emphasis on facilitating rather than restricting development: this approach is deemed more responsive to scheme objectives than that of previous schemes which mainly judged a project’s acceptability on whether it lay within or outside a defined settlement boundary (settlement ‘limit’).

As one practical example of the new approach, the restrictive term “Limits of Permitted Development” used in previous Schemes has been replaced with the more flexible “Settlement Boundaries”. In this context revisions to some growth zone boundaries have been made based on TCPB rezoning.
approvals1; these mainly resulted from SIE Act-related commitments such as land conversion schemes and VRS. Some amendments were also made as a result of written representations from the Public Consultation process. Criteria for including sites in revised boundaries were:

- The site lay contiguous to settlement boundaries and was considered to contribute to improved settlement structure, rounding off or infilling;
- Connections from the site to transport and utility networks could be made without undue public expense, and
- The site had been cleared and had already been provided with roads and utilities or where development had been completed, as at 31 December, 2005.

In and around growth zones where building and land use permit applications had been approved but were found to be some distance away from settlement boundaries and did not appear to be rounding off settlement structure or complementing transport and utility networks, boundaries were not adjusted. In all other cases settlement boundaries remain unchanged as in previous Schemes.

### 3.4 Process for the Generation and Use of Policies

In formulating policies and programmes to assist in implementing the vision for the District, the planning process adopted the following approach:

- Reviewing existing Schemes and policies;
- Conducting site visits and ground–truthing of new major strategic developments;
- Carrying out consultations, workshops and focus group sessions with key stakeholders to update and verify policy and issue assumptions;
- Applying the strategic development principles framework derived from the NDS to the level of the District;
- Consolidating and updating district-wide generic policies and formulating more detailed policies for managing and controlling development for specific uses, settlements and areas of land;
- Identifying mechanisms for implementation, action area planning and monitoring;
- Preparing revised Schemes for statutory planning procedures, Public Deposit and Modification; and
- Finalisation of revised Scheme following approval of Modifications.

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1 The rezoning approval implied a land conversion certificate had been obtained from the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries.
To aid understanding and application, the Policies generated through this process have been grouped as follows:-

- **Strategic Development (SD) policies** (refer to section 4.1), which are generic to a variety of development types and have district-wide application;

- **Detailed Development policies** (refer to sections 4.2-4.12), which mainly apply to a particular land use type, settlement or area.

Strategic policies should be used to determine if the development, in principle, is likely to be given approval given a range of specified criteria. Once the ‘in-principle’ decision has been taken to proceed, the detailed policies and related Design Guidance for specific land use types should be used to prepare or assess key elements of the proposal, such as its likely impacts on adjoining uses, the local community and amenity and the natural and built environment.

The policies should be used not only to aid central and local Government officers in providing advice and assessing development proposals but also to guide project promoters, developers and individuals in preparing and designing their projects (along with the new Design Guidance).

They should also be used in appropriate cases as a basis for negotiation so that viable and sustainable development can be achieved from which all parties, including other Government Ministries and agencies in the public sector, private sector organisations and the community, can benefit.

**It should be noted that in preparing and assessing building and land use permit applications, strategic development policies should take precedence over detailed policies.**
4 Policies and Proposals

4.1 Strategic Development Policies

Within the District there are three broad locations where development may be proposed:

(1) within clearly defined settlement boundaries;
(2) on the edge of settlements; and
(3) outside the boundaries of defined settlements.

Based on the key development principles and objectives a development strategy for the District has been devised with the following locational preferences:

- Focusing strategic developments in and around the growth zones i.e. the identified Rural Regeneration Zones of Rose Belle/New Grove and Chemin Grenier, the Special Use Zone around Plaine Magnien and the SSR International Airport at Plaisance and within the Mahebourg Tourism Zone from Grand Port via Mahebourg south to Blue Bay;
- Consolidating other developments within and on the edge of existing settlement boundaries and villages to foster smaller scale growth and sustain local economies; and
- Restricting major new developments elsewhere, whilst
- Providing flexibility to accommodate other proposals which require particular sites in specified circumstances.

As an aid to preparing or assessing acceptability ‘in principle’ of a proposed development’s location in relation to the settlement strategy, six strategic policies have been devised. A sequential approach to site selection is proposed which incorporates specific performance criteria to help determine how appropriate a proposal is in relation to the key locational preferences described above, as well as site context and other measures.

*Figure 4.1* overleaf illustrates the broad approach.
Figure 4.1 Clustering and the Sequential Approach
SD 1

Development Proposed within Settlement Boundaries

Subject to the provisions of Policy SD 2 of this Outline Planning Scheme development, other than bad neighbour development, should normally be permitted within settlement boundaries as defined on the Development Management Map. A sequential approach should be followed which shows that previously developed, under-utilised or vacant land or premises have been considered for use before new greenfield sites have been selected. Such development should not constrain the expansion of significant employment generators nor inhibit the comprehensive development of areas or adjacent sites.

Justification: In order to make efficient use of existing services and facilities and utility and transport infrastructure, patterns of development should tend towards concentration rather than dispersal. Within settlement boundaries, sites within built-up areas should be considered before new greenfield land is developed. By focusing and clustering development within settlement boundaries, pressures on areas of environmental sensitivity and landscape significance and on valuable agricultural land can be reduced and efficiencies in the provision and use of expensive public infrastructure can be achieved.

Clustering development which should not adversely affect future development of areas of vacant or underutilised land, adversely impact upon quality of life nor prevent expansion or disrupt existing business activities should be actively promoted within settlement boundaries. Piecemeal development or one-off developments which would impact on the comprehensive development or redevelopment of areas by sterilising land, stagnating or inhibiting access to other land parcels should not be encouraged.

SD 2

Development Proposed within Settlement Boundaries on Sites Suitable for Agriculture, or on Sites of Environmental Sensitivity or Landscape Significance

In support of Policy SD 1 where a proposed development other than a bad neighbour development is located on land identified as being of Agricultural Suitability or in or adjoining an Area of Landscape Significance or Environmental Sensitivity, there should be a general presumption in favour of development subject to statutory clearances being obtained from the relevant authorities.

In considering such clearances within settlement boundaries relevant authorities should take into account the following criteria:
Where the proposal is from a small owner seeking residential property for themselves or their close kin and can be considered under the SIE Act; or

Where land suitable for agriculture has been determined to be surplus to future long term agricultural requirements by the owner of such land and which could otherwise be developed more efficiently than a similar-sized development outside settlement boundaries and which includes uses such as community or social facilities or affordable housing or NHDC scheme; or

Where there has been formal commitments given by the Ministry responsible for Public Utilities, the Local Authority, the Town and Country Planning Board, the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands or other Government-approved scheme prior to the approval of this Outline Scheme, provided such commitments are duly supported by bona fide evidence i.e. original and authentic documents

And the proposals:

- Do not inhibit the comprehensive development of an area or restrict access to adjoining areas of land appropriate for development or the sequential release of land nor prevent expansion or disrupt existing business/employment generating activities; and they
- Can be readily connected to existing transport and utility networks or can be connected without unacceptable public expense.

Justification: Although there is a presumption in favour of most forms of development within settlement boundaries, other than bad neighbour developments, appropriate clearances will still need to be sought in accordance with policies of relevant authorities where sites are located on land identified as being suitable for agriculture (or forest), or on land with environmental sensitivity or landscape significance.

Notwithstanding the clustering and sustainability principles facilitated under Policy SD 1 development proposals within settlements boundaries need to be balanced against the loss of agricultural land likely to be required in the long term, or land of ecological or landscape significance. Mitigation measures and sensitive designs should be paramount in considering such sites for development, whilst ensuring development of other sites in the vicinity is not inhibited or stagnated by the development proposed.
SD 3

Development on the Edge of Settlement Boundaries

There should be a general presumption in favour of development on the edge of but outside defined settlement boundaries providing such development proposals are aimed at:

- Consolidating gaps in an otherwise built up area; or
- Rounding off an existing settlement being contiguous with its existing built-up area and are not creating or progressing ribbon development; or
- Infilling (of development) where no strategic gap between settlements is proposed; or
- Providing industrial uses which may not be appropriate within settlement boundaries;

and

- Are capable of ready connection to existing utility supplies and transport networks or can be connected without unacceptable public expense;

Or where:

- The proposal is from a small owner seeking residential property for themselves or their close kin and can be considered as a hardship case, provided that in the opinion of the relevant authorities such release would not encourage large scale removal of land from agriculture; or
- Land suitable for agriculture which has been determined to be surplus to future long term agricultural requirements by the owner of such land and which could otherwise be developed more efficiently than a similar-sized development outside settlement boundaries and which includes uses such as community or social facilities or affordable housing or NHDC scheme; or
- There has been a formal commitment given by the Ministry responsible for Public Utilities, the Local Authority, the Town and Country Planning Board, the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands or other Government-approved scheme prior to the approval of this Outline Scheme, provided such a commitment is duly supported by bona fide evidence ie. original and authentic documents;

And the proposals:
• Are not located in an environmentally sensitive area nor in an area of landscape significance as notified by the Ministry responsible for Environment and National Development Unit; or
• Are not occupying a site of long term suitability for agriculture, forestry or an irrigation zone as notified by the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security.

Justification: Generally there are grounds for refusing development proposals on the edge of, but outside, settlement boundaries on account of the large amount of land already available but lying undeveloped within many settlement boundaries, or through sites committed or being processed for land conversion, Voluntary Retirement Schemes (VRS) and morcellements.

However it is clear that in some areas land prices and/or ownership complexities constrain lower income groups from achieving land/plot acquisition, whilst in others, conflicts between agencies over land development priorities has left developable land idle. It would be unrealistic to resist demand for all new uses on the edge of settlements, especially for employment-generating uses where demand can be demonstrated or to provide housing opportunities for particular vulnerable income groups or much-needed community facilities and on lands no longer required for agriculture.

Some industrial uses, other than bad neighbour developments, requiring large floor plates and being potentially incompatible with residential uses by nature of their size and scale, or their operation due to noise, emission of smoke, dust, fumes, or traffic generation may be better located on the edge of settlement boundaries.

In specific cases, through collaboration with the relevant clearance authorities, mitigating circumstances such as cases of family hardship, or opportunities for land owners to utilise surplus agricultural lands for integrated development schemes involving provision of a mix of uses including affordable housing or community and social facilities, or prior commitments should be taken into account in determining appropriate clearances. In this context hardship cases, small owner and close kin are as defined by the guidelines produced by the Town and Country Planning Board, 1998 and as subsequently amended.

The Town and Country Planning Board approved guidelines regarding hardship cases applicable to small owners and their close kin are as follows:

1. A small owner is one who owns not more than one hectare (i.e. 10,000m²) in the aggregate and which may be made up of more than one portion located in different places in Mauritius;
2. If a small owner is seeking residential property for himself, **none** of the properties should be located within settlement boundaries;

3. If he is seeking residential property for his **close kin**, he should have no other land for that purpose (except his own private residential property) within settlement boundaries.

4. **Close kin** is defined to include ascendants or descendants (Parents and their children, grandparents and grandchildren) up to the level of first cousin (i.e. a cousin, an uncle or an aunt, a nephew or a niece) who do not own any plot of land and who would benefit from the sale or donation.;

5. The plot to be released should not normally exceed **422m² (10 perches)** per beneficiary.

**And**

The land in question

(a) Should be located in an area where development is permissible in accordance with the policies of the **Outline Scheme** or **Development plan**, as the case may be, of the relevant **Local Authority**;

(b) Should not be located within a gazetted irrigation area;

(c) Should have been owned as at **30 September, 2005**. Consideration may be given to land accrued through donation/inheritance after 30th September 2005, subject to a Land Conversion Permit being obtained from the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries and provided parent property was acquired/in possession of original owner prior to 30 September 2005.

6. The applicant and the beneficiaries where applicable should support their application by way of an affidavit /declaration.

7. The eventual beneficiary should be in a position to provide the necessary basic infrastructure to site (water, roads and electricity).

8. Hardship criteria should not be used for the release of sites forming part of subdivisions subject of duly approved agricultural morcellements.
SD 4

Development on Land Outside Settlement Boundaries

There should be a general presumption against proposals for development outside settlement boundaries unless the proposal:

- Has been shown to have followed the sequential approach to the release of sites identified in SD 1, SD 2 and SD 3 and there are no suitable sites within or on the edge of settlement boundaries; and
- Is for the essential purposes of agriculture, forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural area; or
- Is for the re-use or refurbishment of existing buildings set in their own grounds; or
- Is considered a bad neighbour development as defined in Policy ID 4; or
- In cases of national interest when having regard to material considerations, locational preferences linked to employment-creating uses and socio-economic policies of Government, development may have to be outside settlement boundaries and is acceptable on planning, traffic impact and environmental impact grounds; and
- Is capable of ready connection to existing utility supplies and transport networks or can be connected without unacceptable public expense;

Or where:

- The proposal is from a small owner seeking residential property for themselves and their close kin and can be considered as a hardship case, provided that in the opinion of the relevant authorities such release would not encourage large scale removal of land from agriculture; or
- There has been a formal commitment given by the Ministry responsible for Public Utilities, Local Authority, the Town and Country Planning Board, the Ministry responsible for housing and Lands or other Government-approved scheme prior to the approval of this Outline Planning Scheme, provided such a commitment is duly supported by bona fide evidence i.e. original and authentic documents;

And the proposal:

- Is not located in an environmentally sensitive area nor in an area of landscape significance as notified by the Ministry responsible for Environment and National Development Unit; or
• Is not occupying a site of long term suitability for agriculture, forestry or an irrigation zone as notified by the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security;
• Broadly follows the design principles contained in Design Guidance outlined in SD 5.

Justification: At the District level there is sufficient land available, committed or vacant within settlement boundaries for residential development and through approved morcellement, VRS and other land conversion schemes to accommodate future residential needs for the next 15-20 years. To conserve remaining land in the District, especially land required for long term agriculture, or land that has an ecological or landscape significance, a sequential approach to new development should be followed which first considers sites within or on the edge of built-up areas in existing settlements before greenfield sites outside settlement boundaries are selected. This presumption reinforces key NDS objectives for clustered growth and more efficient provision of transport and utility facilities and social and community services.

It is recognised however that not all development can or should be accommodated within settlement boundaries and under well-defined circumstances some developments may be more appropriately located outside settlement clusters and the main built-up areas.

The definition of hardship case, small owner and close kin is as defined in SD3.

SD 5

Design Quality and Sustainable Development

New development should conserve and enhance the character and attractiveness of the District so as to foster desirable and accessible living and working areas that provide an improving quality of living. Proposed development should be expected to conform to national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) on Design quality of:

• Residential Development;
• Industrial Development;
• Commercial Development;
• Hotels and Integrated Resorts Development;

And
• Any future nationally-adopted Design Guidance matter.

For all developments, relevant design considerations should include:
- Ensuring an appropriate standard of design including density, height, bulk and scale and improving areas of poor quality environment;
- Preserving and enhancing historic buildings and townscape and maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place;
- Protecting and enhancing urban open space, green wedges, areas of landscape significance, environmentally sensitive areas and land/water interface areas;
- Redeveloping vacant and under-used sites and optimising the use of previously developed built-up areas; and
- Improving existing building stock.
- Adopting energy-saving designs, devices and eco-friendly principles

Development in coastal locations and in coastal settlements particularly in areas of ‘Coastal Lands’ as defined by updated Planning Policy Guidance – Design Guidance: Residential Coastal Development, should be carefully designed given the sensitive location and the visual impact when viewed from the lagoon. The Design Guidance contains particular design principles for development in the Coastal Lands area with which all developments should normally conform.

Justification: A key objective of the NDS is to promote sustainable development and good design is essential if attractive, high-quality sustainable places are to be produced where people (both residents and visitors) will want to live, work and relax. Quality design is fundamental to any sustainable strategy of urban, rural or coastal redevelopment and upgrading.

Difficulty has been experienced in the past when development designs and decisions have not been based on sound design principles. A series of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) documents has been prepared and adopted, the first of which (PPG1) covers Design Guidance for some key land use types which promote and explain the approach to better quality design principles and practice. The Design Guidance PPG should also help to reduce uncertainty and delay in the decision-making process. Whilst the guidance aims to cover a variety of locational preferences they do not cover every possible circumstance and there needs to be some flexibility in their application.

Particular care with design is required on sites fringing the coastline. More stringent design criteria particularly with regard to density, height, scale, setbacks, use of materials, landscaping and sewage treatment provision is provided to ensure that coastal development is appropriate, environmentally acceptable and suited to the sensitive coastal location.
The process also allows for updating and additions of new PPG as resources and demands change. However, should a departure from Guidance be proposed it should be the developer’s or Government officer’s responsibility to provide reasoned justification for such a variance. The statutory status of the updated Guidance is deliberate to ensure that they are deemed material and relevant considerations when assessing development proposals and when appeals against refusal of development permission are being heard.

**SD 6**

**Growth Zones and Action Area Plans (AAPs)**

*Where sites for major new developments are required or are being considered within the District, public and private sector stakeholders as well as public sector agencies should be first directed towards settlements capable of forming the basis for sustainable long term growth. Such growth zones have been defined and designated as Urban Renaissance Zones,*

*Rural Regeneration Zones, Tourism Zones or Special Use Zones according to criteria established within the National Development Strategy. Rural Regeneration Zones comprise the settlements of Rose Belle/ New Grove and Chemin Grenier, the Special Use Zone focuses on Plaine Magnien and SSRIA at Plaisance and the Tourism Zone in the District around Mahebourg stretching from Grand Port to Blue Bay.*

*Where sites for major development can be found in designated growth zones and in other suitable areas of significance for environmental, social or economic planning and acceptable on planning grounds, scheme promoters and private sector developers should be encouraged to bring forward Action Area Plans in accordance with the Design Guidance in policy SD5 and other relevant policies contained in this Outline Planning Scheme.*

*Justification:* Growth zones have been identified within the NDS as development opportunity areas on the basis of good or potential strategic road network links, thresholds of population and jobs and proximity to social networks, retail and community services and facilities. Other criteria for selecting growth zones can include the need to attract inward investment (both private and public) to trigger regeneration due in part to loss of employment in the sugar industry, where key development areas have already been identified in other nationally-adopted studies (for example the Tourism Development Plan), or where there are conflicting pressures for development and conservation.

Where suitable sites for major developments can be found in strategic growth zones as Urban Renaissance Zones, Rural Regeneration Zones, Tourism Zones
and Special Use Zones within the NDS, government/private sector and developers should be encouraged to draw up Action Area Plans for mixed use, special use and tourism-related developments involving public sector involvement as appropriate. In preparing such Action Area Plans consideration should also be given to the requirements for future support activities including public transport, traffic management and new highways and housing, education and health facilities. In these cases planning for future adequate water, sanitation and solid waste facilities should also be important considerations.

The process of Action Area planning should involve:

- An area-wide approach to integrated development planning and design;
- Targeted public and private sector investments

and in appropriate circumstances:

- The use of planning obligations/agreements, and
- Improved and simplified mechanisms, including financial incentives for project implementation.

4.2 Housing

The Housing Technical Note prepared as background to this Outline Planning Scheme analysed residential supply and demand for land in the Grand Port Savanne District Council Area. This Technical Note indicates that around 26,900 housing units would be required over the next 20 year period – some 21,400 arising from demand of the Districts’ population growth and 5,500 assumed to be generated by households moving into the District.

Information on the supply of land from VRS, approved morcellement and other government land conversion projects indicates some 1,080 ha has already been committed which could accommodate around 21,600 units. Another 7,700 units could be yielded through infill/densification and a reduction in vacancy rates. This figure however does not include vacant or undeveloped land still available within existing settlement boundaries or that may be included in Integrated Resort Schemes (IRS) or other future land conversion schemes.

At the District level then, it could be argued that no additional land would be required. However, it would be unrealistic to consider freezing the release of further residential land over the time frame of this Outline Planning Scheme given cultural factors, preferences for particularly attractive sites and potential changes in demand for new house types, land and plots over the next two decades. Rather then, revised housing policies should focus on how best to manage future residential development and land release.
In this context the location of proposed housing and morcellement developments should be primarily assessed under policies SD1 to SD 4 and design aspects under SD 5 and, in particular the Residential Design Guidance. Aspects such as morcellement layouts and design, density, bulk, scale, plot coverage, setbacks, materials, tall buildings, building on hill slopes, mixed use, provision of infrastructure, parking and road layouts are addressed in the Residential Design Guidance. For other components of housing and morcellement development the following policies apply.

H 1

Development in or on the Edge of Minor Settlements

*In or on the edge of minor settlements for which no settlement boundaries have been defined development should be permitted subject to the clustering principle and sequential approach outlined in SD 1, SD 2 and SD 3 and design parameters under SD 5.*

*Justification:* The design and assessment of proposals for sites in and around small villages which have no defined boundaries should also follow the sequential approach and clustering principles adopted for major settlements. Rounding off and infilling in small settlements and villages assists in the efficient use of land as a resource, in the effective provision of transport services and utilities and in the consolidation of existing community and social networks.

For the purposes of this policy, a minor settlement is defined as “one having more than fifteen houses in a more or less compact form and which shows potential in growing into a proper settlement”

H 2

Upgrading Programmes

*Relocation of squatters should be considered if regularising or upgrading in situ is not feasible. Criteria for relocation should include where sites are located where utilities and access cannot be provided at acceptable public cost or where sites are located in areas of environmental sensitivity or landscape significance or where site conditions are considered to impact adversely on the health and safety of occupants or nearby residents. If relocation is being considered the sequential approach outlined in Policies SD 1, SD 2 and, SD 3 should be followed to identify suitable sites.*

*Justification:* This policy seeks to encourage the upgrading of sub-standard residential areas. The objective is first to consider improving conditions in existing settlements which have identified concentrations of sub-standard housing and/or infrastructure before relocation to new sites is examined. Design
principles rather than strict adherence to standards (except on health and safety grounds) may be appropriate in the regularisation, upgrading or relocation process.

H 3

Affordable Housing, Low Cost Housing and Land Development

Identification of sites for morcellement and schemes which are aimed at providing low cost or affordable housing including NHDC and VRS projects should follow the provisions of strategic development policies SD2 and SD 3 and should wherever possible be located within or adjoining settlement boundaries. The use of surplus agricultural land within settlement boundaries or land that can be released from agriculture on the edge of settlements should be considered favourably subject to clearance from the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries.

Flexibility in plot size may be appropriate if well-designed layouts are proposed. Similarly flexibility, except for maximum height allowable and for on-plot sewage disposal particularly in Coastal Lands, may be appropriate for residential development on existing legal small residential plots within settlement boundaries on economic hardship grounds. The general design principles of the Residential Design Guidance and SD 5 should be broadly followed particularly with regard to infrastructure provision.

Justification: NDS studies based on CSO data suggest up to 90% of individual families may not be able to afford plots of land within morcellements where these are developed by the private sector. Much residential development seems to be financed through traditional extended family practices which facilitate initial land purchase the site often being developed over time as and when further resources become available.

VRS and NHDC provide some housing options for lower income families. However prevailing land prices in and around settlement boundaries or land ownership complexities have often resulted in sites being only available to the public sector in locations remote from existing settlements and community facilities. Such remotely located sites often mean that provision of services and utilities becomes more expensive with knock-on effects on the costs of construction and delivery to the consumer.

The Government through the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands is currently investigating a range of affordable housing mechanisms and the intent of this policy is to provide sites in sustainable locations, integrated with existing settlements and infrastructure and community facility networks.
In the future, development under low cost and affordable housing schemes should follow the clustering and sequential approach principles within the strategic development policies and target vacant, unused or under-utilised sites in or on the edge of already built-up areas before considering green field sites in new locations. New Government housing policies and funding mechanisms will be needed to facilitate such developments which are more likely to be cost effective than similar schemes in more remote locations. Some sites can be made available within or on the edge of settlements providing a more flexible approach to the use or re-use of agricultural land is followed. Strategic policies SD2 and SD3 and housing policy H 1 provide guidance.

Plot size may be flexible to ensure affordability can be achieved. Similarly flexibility in permitting residential development on existing small plots with legal land title in existing settlement boundaries may be appropriate to enable low income owners to undertake property improvements. Residential Design Guidance incorporates design concepts for affordable housing morcellements and developments and acknowledges low cost housing improvements.

4.3 Heritage Conservation

The wealth of buildings of special architectural, cultural and historic interest in Mauritius plays a large part in maintaining and creating the character of the island’s historic landscape. There are over a 160 National Heritage sites and Monuments on the statutory schedule (National Heritage Fund Act 2003). The continued maintenance and repair of this built heritage is essential to maintaining and enhancing the character of the island.

Mahebourg is particularly significant in Mauritian heritage and many buildings of architectural or historic interest are located within the town itself and surrounding settlements and islands. The continued stewardship and repair of this built heritage is essential to maintaining and enhancing the character of the Mahebourg area in particular as well as the island in general.

HC 1

National Heritage Sites and Monuments and Conservation Areas

The quality and local distinctiveness of the historic built environment should be maintained and improved by:

- Protecting all National Heritage Sites and Monuments, their settings and historic landscapes against demolition and inappropriate alteration or development. There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of National Heritage Sites and Monuments;
- Proposals for external or internal alterations or additions to National Heritage Sites and Monuments should respect the integrity
of the buildings or structures and harmonise with their special architectural, cultural or historic features and character; and

- **Encouraging conversion of appropriate redundant National Heritage Sites and Monuments to new uses that do not adversely affect their special architectural, cultural or historic value and as a means of securing their economic viability.**

The setting of a National Heritage Sites or Monument should be a material consideration in the determination of development proposals. A list of items of National Heritage is annexed in Schedule Two of this Outline Scheme.

**Justification:** A schedule has been prepared under the National Heritage Fund Act 2003 Act which lists the items of National Heritage of Mauritius. Twenty national heritage items are located in the District Council Area as detailed in Schedule Two.

Any applications located within the setting of an item of National Heritage or involving such items should be carefully considered and be in accordance with the National Heritage Trust Fund Act. Opportunities for private sector usage of National Heritage items which can facilitate their sustainable use should be supported subject to broad conformity with The Design Guidance and SD5.

**HC 2**

**Mahebourg Waterfront**

*Any development within or in the vicinity of the Mahebourg Waterfront should ensure the setting, architectural features and townscape of the waterfront are not adversely affected by any proposed development including civil works.*

Complementary townscape improvements within Mahebourg to enhance visitor and local interest in the architecture and history of the waterfront area should be coordinated by the Ministry responsible for Arts and Culture and the District Council. Consideration should be given to preparing an Action Area Plan to integrate the recently-completed Government-funded waterfront regeneration scheme with the few remaining examples of historic buildings remaining within the vicinity.

**Justification:** Buildings and structures in Mahebourg represent assets of important architectural and historical interest including main churches and public buildings and domestic architecture both in stone and timber that provide a concept of past townscape. The waterfront area has been recently regenerated
by Government to provide leisure and recreation amenity for visitors and residents.

The wider Mahebourg area also contains a number of national heritage artefacts as well as a cluster of buildings of architectural and/or historic interest. Efforts are being pursued to undertake a detailed study of the area to devise detailed policies, establish design principles and secure funding for buildings that remain and for streetscape improvements such as footpath and lighting.

As the focus of the Mahebourg Tourism Zone as proposed by the Ministry of Tourism, the area could become a major tourism attraction for local and international visitors e.g. through identification of an ‘historic Quartier naval.’ An Action Area Plan and task force should be established to facilitate work between key private and public sector stakeholders to ensure tourism and conservation objectives are integrated.

Funding sources may include current initiatives of the Ministry responsible for Tourism and the Ministry responsible for Environment and National Development Unit as well as private sponsorship.

In the interim and using the precautionary principle approach, any new buildings/redevelopment proposed within Mahebourg in the and around the waterfront area, should respect buildings of architectural and/or historic merits and their settings.

4.4 Education, Health and Community Facilities

The background to these policies is provided in the National Development Strategy.

SC1

Pre-Primary Education

Proposals for the provision of pre-primary centres should be favourably considered if the development meets the following criteria in order of preference:

(a) Purpose-built centres on separate suitable sites within settlement boundaries;

(b) the use of appropriate community buildings such as village halls, social/community centres, religious buildings;

(c) the use of part of a private residential building or plot within settlement limits provided that:

(i) the premises are of a suitable size and design to accommodate the maximum number of children enrolled;
(ii) there is sufficient space for off-street car parking for staff;
(iii) no traffic or safety hazards should be created by the parking of vehicles depositing and collecting children from the site; and
(iv) no environmental or other nuisance should be caused to detract from residential amenities of the area.

Justification: It is the Government’s aim to offer the opportunity of pre-primary education to all children in the 3 to 5 year age group. Ideally, such education facilities should be attached to all primary schools but financial constraints mean that for some time provision will have to continue to be made in other premises by both public and private sectors. A considerable contribution is made by small private pre-primary centres on residential plots and this should continue to be permitted provided that specified criteria are met.

SC 2

Location of School Sites

Sites selected for schools should follow the sequential approach outlined in Policies SD 1, SD 2 and SD 3 and be either within or on the edges of settlements where large vacant sites, utility networks and public transport services are available or can be provided at acceptable public cost. In appropriate cases, new District-level public sports and recreation facilities should be considered for location adjoining major school sites where a high level of accessibility especially by public transport can lead to more efficient provision through shared use.

Justification: The Ministry responsible for Education has been actively constructing new schools especially secondary and sixth form colleges to address the shortage of high school places throughout the country. The Outline Scheme seeks to enable the education authorities to plan for new schools in areas of growth or deprivation consistent with its aims and development principles. Ideally, all primary school children should be able to walk to their nearest school and all school aged children should have access to a choice of travel modes including public transport.

In well–accessed locations, especially by public transport, consideration should be given to provision of district level public sports and recreation facilities where shared use of facilities by students, staff and the community can lead to efficiency in provision and use of expensive Government social infrastructure.
SC 3

Location and Clustering of Community Facilities

*Proposals for community facilities within village or settlement centres or on sites which are easily accessible by public transport within settlement boundaries should be favourably considered. Where suitable sites are not available within settlement boundaries having regard to the sequential approach under Policy SD 1 and SD 2, sites on the edge of settlements may be considered in accordance with Policy SD 3.*

*Justification:* Community facilities should be located on sites which are conveniently and easily accessible by a variety of travel modes so as to enhance accessibility and use. Clustering of community facilities should encourage more efficient and effective use of all amenities and can facilitate sharing of parking, access roads, open space and other local services.

SC 4

Location of District and Regional Sports Facilities

*Future District and when appropriate regional sports facilities should wherever possible be located close to schools lacking their own facilities and/or within designated growth zones such as Rural Regeneration Zones in accordance with Policy SC 2. Such sites should have a high level of accessibility which provides for a variety of travel modes particularly public transport.*

*Justification:* Many existing schools have insufficient space on site to accommodate suitable sports facilities. The development of such facilities in strategic locations would enable school children to have adequate access to physical education. Rural Regeneration Zones would be appropriate locations for such sports facilities where a higher level of accessibility is likely to be available or achievable. The potential for multiple and shared use of sports and related recreation facilities including parking should be considered when drawing up new proposals for major projects.

SC 5

Health Facilities

*New health facilities including private health clinics should be sited in accordance with the clustering principle and sequential approach outlined in the Strategic Development policies. Sites for major new health facilities should be capable of accommodating future expansion needs, including future car parking for visitors and staff and a landscape buffer. A Transport Assessment as outlined in Policy TP 2 and an EIA as required under the*
Environment Protection Act 2002 should be undertaken as part of the building and land use permit procedures.

Justification: Whilst the Ministry responsible for Health and Quality of Life is consolidating public health facilities and hospitals mainly on existing sites, private health clinics are emerging throughout the country. Some medical facilities can generate large volumes of traffic, need to be well located to the highway and public transport networks and once established tend to expand over time: strategic performance criteria can guide such development to appropriate locations. The sites for new facilities should be within or contiguous with settlement boundaries, be located where a range of transport modes are available for community users, have good site access and be located away from bad neighbour development.

SC 6

Cemeteries, Crematoria and Cremation Grounds

Proposals for cemeteries, crematoria and cremation grounds should follow the sequential approach to development outlined in Policy SD 3 such that these uses are located on the edge of settlements, in accessible locations for the community, away from Environmentally Sensitive Areas and where they do not pose a threat to restricting or sterilising development of existing settlements. Clearance from Ministry of Health and Water Resources Unit (for cemeteries) must be obtained in the planning of new cemeteries, crematoria and cremation grounds.

A buffer zone of at least 200 metres from sensitive uses should be observed for new cemeteries and cremation grounds and a minimum buffer zone of 100 metres would be desirable for crematoria.

Justification: These uses are required to be accessible to local communities and individual cultural and religious groups yet if not carefully located could restrict or frustrate the future expansion of settlements. The criteria within Policy SD 3 provide the performance measures by which to address the locational aspects of these forms of development.

SC 7

Access for Disabled People

Proposals for the construction (or alteration) of buildings open to the public and buildings used for employment and education purposes should normally provide suitable access and facilities for people with disabilities, as customers, visitors and employees. The access design should generally be in accordance with that outlined in Design Guidance specified in SD 5.
In determining the precise requirements account should be taken of the number of disabled persons likely to use the building, the cost of provision and any other constraints.

Justification: It is the Government’s aim that people with disabilities should play as full a role in society as possible. The inaccessibility of land, buildings, transport and other facilities often prevents this. Given the number of persons in the community with a disability there is a strong case for using development and building permit powers to improve access for them. Providing better access can be costly however and care should be taken to ensure that any such requirements imposed on a development project are reasonable in relation to likely usage, cost of provision and other constraints. Design Guidance contains guidelines on the location, provision and design aspects of disabled access.

4.5 Employment Uses

Employment uses are vital to support the four pillars of the Mauritian economy – notably industry, service sector including commercial and financial services and ICT, tourism and agriculture. Employment-related development policies are as follows:

4.5.1 Commercial and Retail Development

CR 1

Proposals for commercial and retail development including shops, offices and restaurants should conform to the clustering principle and sequential approach outlined in the Strategic Development policies such that areas within settlement boundaries particularly sites in Urban Renaissance Zones, Rural Regeneration Zones and village centres should be explored before sites on the edge of settlements are considered. The design of retail, office, commercial and business development should generally be in accordance with the Commercial Design Guidance and SD 5.

Major new retail stores and shopping malls should first be considered in settlement centres, then in edge-of-centre locations. Proposed out-of-centre retail stores should only be acceptable in cases where:

- No suitable site in the settlement centre or edge of centre is available; and
- The development either by itself or taken together with other development proposals has been assessed to show it should not undermine the vitality or viability of nearby centres and should contribute to local and regional shopping needs by improving the range of goods and services available; and
• The site is well related to transport and utility networks and has been assessed by way of a Traffic Assessment in line with the requirements of Policy TP 2; and
• The site does not occupy land which is considered to be suitable for long term agriculture or is environmentally sensitive or of landscape significance; and
• The design of the proposed development enhances the local built and natural environment and generally accords with Commercial Design Guidance.

Shops including tabagie, small groceries and snack foods premises which serve local neighbourhood needs may be located within settlement boundaries and within predominantly residential areas providing the gross floorspace does not exceed 60m² and such developments have due regard to traffic and pedestrian safety. Proposals for new local shops with direct access onto highway and main roads should not normally be permitted. The location and requirements for small shops not exceeding 60m² should broadly conform to the principles detailed in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 1) on Commercial Development (Local centres and Corner shops.)

**Justification:** Commercial, business and retail developments including shops, offices and restaurants should wherever possible be located so as to add to the vitality of settlement and village centres in areas well-served by a variety of transport modes and employment pools. New development should:

• Sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of settlement and village centres;
• Maintain an efficient, competitive and innovative commercial and retail sector;
• Cluster commercial and retailing and other complementary development so as to encourage competition – this produces benefits to consumers and reduces the need for multiple car trips to separate locations; and
• Ensure the availability of and easy access to a wide range of shops, employment, services and facilities.

In considering proposals the permitting authorities should adopt the clustering principle and sequential approach to site selection and use as outlined in the Strategic Development policies.

It is recognised however that certain retail activities for example those shopping malls requiring large floor plates are better located out of centre. When preparing proposals for such developments scheme promoters will need to show that the project should not adversely affect existing centre retail by undertaking an assessment and a related Traffic Assessment. The criteria to be included in
these assessments for use by developers in preparing new proposals and to facilitate permitting authorities in assessing development applications should include the following:

- How does the development contribute to local shopping needs;
- What are the requirements for a large single floor area (or external sales and storage area) and a substantial adjacent customer car park;
- What is the impact on local sales patterns; are these sufficient to prejudice the role or vitality of existing centres;
- What is the impact on the surrounding road and public transport networks;
- What is the provision for the disabled and pedestrians;
- How is the utility infrastructure to be provided and at what (acceptable public) cost; and
- How does the development safeguard or enhance land of suitability for agriculture and the local environment and landscape.

Approval is likely to be subject to:

- The proposed development being an appropriate use for the land;
- Lack of an available, alternative site within or adjacent to the settlement centre and;
- It being in broad conformity with Commercial Design Guidance.

Permission is likely to be refused if:

- Any diversion of trade likely to result from the new scheme could seriously affect the vitality and viability of any nearby centre as a whole; or
- The development could give rise to unsatisfactory traffic, public transport, parking or environmental problems.

Smaller retail uses in residential and other areas can assist in providing services for the daily needs of those living or working in the vicinity.

The Commercial Design Guidance should assist in encouraging better design in centres and ensure that cumulative effects of central area evolution can be addressed through consistent design parameters.
4.5.2 Business Parks, High Tech, ICT and Research and Development Offices

BP 1

Business Park Development

Locations for business, high tech, research and development parks should follow the clustering principle and sequential approach outlined in the Strategic Development policies and should accommodate those uses that are non-pollutive and that engage high valued and knowledge-intensive activities. Vacant land or under-utilised sites in existing business parks or as identified at Rose Belle should be examined before new greenfield locations are considered.

Generally a presumption in favour of development should be given to clustering of such uses into locations with convenient access and within a good landscape setting and with a high standard of design. The Board of Investment and Business Parks of Mauritius should be consulted regarding the location of such parks. Business park designs should broadly conform to Commercial Design Guidance.

Justification: Further growth in the financial and ICT sectors of the economy is likely to lead to demand for types of office space that are not currently available. It is common international practice for the ICT sector in particular to locate in office campus environments outside the central areas and CBDs (Central Business Districts) - Silicon Valley in the USA and Cybercity near Reduit are prime examples of this trend.

Policy BP1 reinforces Government’s intent to capture a share of the growing ICT sector and there is likely to be a demand for new types of office environment and new types of office space. Greenfield campuses and highly serviced call centres are examples of new forms that will not fit comfortably into existing settlement centre office stock. Supporting these “edge of town” office environments there will be a need for housing, retail and community services (schools, hospitals, etc). It is likely that clusters will tend to develop at strategic transport nodes and long term planning should anticipate this trend.

Given the importance and land take associated with such uses, the Board of Investment and Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd should be involved in the locational and development-type decision-making process. Commercial Design Guidance has been prepared which should assist in locational, design and assessment decisions for business parks.

4.5.3 Industry

Development proposed for industrial sites, estates or uses should incorporate the sequential approach outlined in the Strategic Development policies as well as the
Industrial Design Guidance outlined in Policy SD 5. However, depending on the industrial use proposed, a varied sequential approach should be adopted. Those industries which are unlikely to adversely impact upon adjoining development should be accommodated within settlement boundaries and make use of available land and sites in existing industrial estates. For medium and large scale industries, sites on the edge of and out of settlement boundaries are likely to be more appropriate. No new industrial zones are identified within this Outline Scheme: however encouragement of mixed uses for under-utilised or vacant sites in existing industrial estates and industrial zones within settlement boundaries is proposed.

Special Use Zones should be considered where major new industrial uses or industrial clusters are being located, expanded or relocated for which Action Area plans should be prepared. More specific policies for industrial development, including bad neighbour development, are as follows.

ID 1

Development in Existing Industrial Estates and Zones within Settlement Boundaries

Within existing industrial estates and zones within settlement boundaries and identified on the Development Management Map there should be a presumption in favour of light industry, small factories and workshops (including Small and Medium Enterprises-SMEs) and those industries not causing a nuisance to nearby residential and other sensitive uses by reason of smoke, fumes, dust, noise, excessive vehicular movements and loading issues.

In existing industrial estates or industrial zones zones within settlement boundaries where limited or no industrial development has materialized, the development scope could be widened so as to encourage mixed use development like commercial and leisure and even residential uses.

Land uses such as wholesalers, timber and building supply merchants and those requiring the sale of bulky goods should be considered favourably in designated industrial estates, subject to transport assessment and retail assessment (for large operations) indicating acceptable and manageable impacts and suitability of operation hours

Justification: In previous Schemes, large tracts of land were identified and zoned for industrial use within settlement boundaries. Although some take-up of industrial land has occurred in some areas, this process is perceived to have been largely unsuccessful in marshalling major new industrial sites to sustain economic growth. In particular whilst there is an expressed shortage of land for
small and medium enterprises (SMEs), incubator and starter units, these have not located to any extent in the existing designated industrial zones.

To encourage more efficient use of industrial land and services within settlement boundaries, some complementary ‘bulky’ commercial uses which require large floor areas and which generate significant volumes of heavy and medium goods vehicles not normally suitable in settlement centre locations could also be clustered in or on the edge of existing industrial estates and zones. Such clustering would enable more viable use of designated industrial sites and help sustain local and regional employment opportunities.

ID 2

Small Scale Enterprises and Home Working

Proposals to operate or extend office/business uses or small scale enterprises from residential properties should only be permitted if the use is ancillary to the principal use as residential. Criteria should include:

(i) Premises are of a suitable size and design to accommodate the additional activity and all its ancillary requirements such as parking, loading area and adequate setbacks from neighbouring properties.

(ii) No neighbours’ objections within a radius of 50 metres.

(iii) no serious adverse impact on residential occupiers in the area or the character of the neighbourhood particularly in regard to noise, smoke, fumes, smells, dust nor excessive vehicle movements or loading and unloading of goods and products;

(iv) Sufficient parking space within the curtilage of the property available to accommodate any staff or visitors;

(v) Safe access from the roadway.

Storage of materials should be able to be contained within the curtilage of the property. The operator of the office/business use or small scale enterprise should reside at the premises.

Justification: Technological advances and the evolution of the ICT sector in Mauritius are expected to facilitate an increasing proportion of the working population being home-based. Use of a room as office or business typically does not require a building and land use permit as clients associated with the business do not need to frequently visit the property or there are very infrequent deliveries from trade vehicles. The use of part of a dwelling on a small scale for an office can similarly be low key in nature, which does not adversely affect residential
amenity, whilst reducing the number of journeys to work and thereby easing traffic congestion. It can also provide local employment opportunities in the service sector.

Small scale enterprises which are carried out in the home without need for modification of the dwelling may also be acceptable but more stringent criteria are necessary to ensure that surrounding residential amenity is respected. Light industrial uses such as panel beating and spray painting, manufacture of furniture and vehicle repairs are not normally suitable in residential areas due to dust, noise and fumes and other environmental effects. However in order to provide for establishing small scale enterprises where start-up capital outlays for new premises may be beyond the operator’s means, use of home may be appropriate where vehicle movements and noise and parking, loading and unloading are not disruptive to the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Examples of small scale enterprises include cooking of sweets and food preparation, sewing and small scale clothing manufacturing, repairs to electrical goods, minor car/mechanical and bicycle repairs and artist studios.

For both use of home as office and for small scale enterprises the key decision is whether the overall character of the dwelling and surrounding amenity will change as a result of the business or enterprise. If the answer to any of the following questions is "yes", then permission is likely to be refused:

- Will the home no longer be used mainly as a private residence?
- Will the business result in a marked rise in traffic or people calling?
- Will the business involve any activities unusual in a residential area?
- Will the business disturb your neighbours at unreasonable hours or create other forms of nuisance such as noise, dust, fumes or smells?

ID 3

Industrial Development at the Edge of Settlement Boundaries

*To facilitate growth and consolidation of industrial uses including manufacturing, storage, warehousing and distribution uses and related support services but not bad neighbour developments as outlined in ID 4, proposals for new development which require large sites and generate high volumes of vehicle and truck movements should follow the sequential approach outlined in SD 3 and SD 4.*

*Existing available, vacant or under-utilised sites in industrial areas on the edge of settlements or outside of settlement boundaries including the re-use of redundant sugar factory buildings should be considered before*
examining new greenfield sites in edge of settlement locations. Clustering of industrial uses should be encouraged where high levels of transport accessibility and utility services, particularly water, sewerage and electricity networks are available or can be provided at acceptable public cost.

Proposals for development may also be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment/ Preliminary Environmental Report in accordance with the EPA 2002 as amended, a Transport Assessment. Proposals should broadly conform to Industrial Design Guidance.

Justification: There are three key factors that determine the suitability of land for industrial usage:

- The site should enjoy secure and direct road access for delivery of raw materials and finished products;
- There should be adequate levels of reliable utility and telecommunications infrastructure, or this must be capable of installation at acceptable public cost; and
- There should be an available labour force within a reasonable commuting distance.

It is recognised that industrial development may not always be suitable within settlement boundaries for valid operational reasons. Also access to markets is highly reliant on efficient access to a good road network which links the industrial premises to the Port, its support industrial premises and raw materials. Land should be accessible and serviced if it is to attract investment in industrial buildings and plant. Clustering should encourage phased release of land for industry and a variety of support activities.

Some areas have already been identified in the District for industrial usage but sites have not been taken up due to a variety of factors including ownership complexities, poor access, lack of flexibility over the size of plots and environmental effects of traffic. Providing a criteria-based approach enables suitable sites to be identified for a range of industrial uses, as well as ensuring consideration of vacant or redundant industrial sites such as re-use of old sugar factory complexes.

Industrial Design Guidance has been prepared to address operational aspects of industrial premises such as layout and service access, health and safety factors such as fire protection and waste water treatment as well as setbacks, landscaping and amenity.
Bad Neighbour Development

The location of bad neighbour uses should follow the sequential approach commencing with Policy SD 3 and where buffer zones are required or potential nuisance exists, with Policy SD 4.

Bad neighbour developments are defined to include quarries, stone crushing plants, concrete batching plants, asphalt mixing plants, power stations and tank farms, animal-rearing uses including piggeries and poultry farms, sewage treatment plants, sites for landfill and other forms of solid waste disposal, waste transfer stations, civic amenity sites, scrap yards, recycling and composting facilities.

Preference should be given to proposals for bad neighbour developments which can be clustered to share a buffer zone or on an existing under-utilised or vacant industrial site including those associated with the sugar industry or proposals that can contribute to regeneration of derelict sites or provide opportunities for transport improvements.

Such proposals should also ensure that:

- Adequate road access and utility provision (electricity, water, sewerage, solid waste and telecommunications facilities) are available or can be provided as part of the development costs;
- A wastewater treatment facility is able to be included in the development (if applicable to the type of development proposed) and measures are incorporated to protect groundwater from being contaminated;
- The development would not adversely impact other employment uses nor prejudice the future expansion of growth zones such as Rural Regeneration Zones, existing settlements or other sensitive uses such as residential development, schools, education and health facilities and tourism sites and complexes;
- The development would not adversely affect areas suitable for agriculture or of environmental sensitivity or landscape significance;
- Mitigation measures including buffer zones, landscaping and an after-care plan required as a condition of an EIA licence approved by the Ministry responsible for Environment are capable of being provided within and around the site as part of the development costs.
Acceptable uses within buffer zones may include agriculture, forestry, non-intensive animal-rearing, grazing and pastures and some leisure and recreation facilities. Certain other uses such as storage, warehousing and distribution industries may also be appropriate at varying distances from a bad neighbour industry. The buffer zones for particular uses should form part of the EIA licence and be determined by the relevant statutory authority.

All industrial development proposals should be in broad accordance with Industrial Design Guidance and take into account the design of the site and the visual impact of the development. General guidance on buffer zones for particular uses is also contained in the Industrial Design Guidance.

Justification: This policy recognises that bad neighbour uses are essential for the continued economic growth of the Mauritian economy but that a precautionary approach to siting new facilities is required to safeguard local environment and amenity. Bad neighbour developments are defined to include those uses requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment licence as listed in the First Schedule (Section 15(2)) Part B of the Environment Protection Act 2002 and/or are considered a potential nuisance to adjoining residential neighbours by reason of noise, dust, smoke, fumes, smells, abnormal hours of operation or parking or excessive loading problems or through the appearance and scale of the proposal.

Bad neighbour developments are required to be distant from residential and other sensitive uses for health and safety reasons and require buffer zones which may preclude certain forms of development within a specified distance. Given the difficulty in identifying new sites for such developments it is important that suitable performance criteria are established to address bad neighbour locational and operational requirements. Although new sites should normally be located away from existing settlements adequate access to road and public transport networks, labour and other linked activities will be important criteria in determining suitable locations.

In selecting new sites for bad neighbour developments locations for some particular facilities such as landfill and stone crushers should where practicable be planned up to 1km distant from sensitive land uses, which include residential areas, hospitals and schools. In and around existing built-up areas a reduced buffer zone may have to be adopted, taking into account topography, the nature of the facility, wind direction and other local site factors.

Where sufficient land is available, the clustering of bad neighbour uses on a single, well-accessed site should be considered in order to reduce adverse environmental effects.
4.6 Agriculture

A 1

Protecting Agriculture Land

*Land suitable for agriculture located outside settlement boundaries should be protected from development unless such development is essential for agriculture, forestry and other uses appropriate to a rural area or if found necessary using the sequential approach outlined in SD 3 and SD 4 and H 1.*

*A high degree of protection should normally be afforded to land within gazetted Irrigation Zones and other land which has fixed irrigation equipment and which is required for long term sustainability of the agricultural sector.*

*Watchman’s quarters cum store of a maximum gross floor area of 30m² may be allowed on agricultural plots of over 1 arpent. However, an owner of more than one agricultural plot of more than one arpent being located contiguous to each other (agricultural plots in single ownership) will not be allowed more than one watchman’s quarters unless there is valid justification provided.*

*“Agricultural subdivisions should comply with the requirements of the Ministry of Agriculture and any Cahier des Charges accompanying these operations should strictly reflect the purpose for which the land is being subdivided.”*

*Proposed integrated and comprehensive development on land suitable for agriculture located within settlement boundaries, or on the edge of settlement boundaries should be considered through the provisions of Policy SD 2, SD 3 and H 1.*

*Justification: Conservation of land suitable for long term agricultural use is a core policy of the NDS and this Scheme and accords with the sequential approach to identifying developable land specified in Policies SD 1, SD 2, SD 3 and SD 4. Development outside settlement boundaries for non-agricultural uses should normally be discouraged where productive agricultural land would be lost. This is particularly important for irrigated lands where heavy investment has been made to provide the necessary infrastructure.*

However there is agricultural land which, primarily due to poor soil conditions, is not likely to be productive in the foreseeable future; furthermore because of restructurin in the sugar sector additional 'productive but non-viable' land is
likely to be sought for release by landowners from sugar use during the plan period.

In such circumstances new development proposals should be directed to such ‘surplus’ sugar lands on sites on the edge of or outside settlement boundaries, in accordance with Policies SD 3 or SD 4 or H 1 and relevant statutory clearances obtained from the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries. Development proposed on agricultural land within settlement boundaries should be considered in accordance with Policy SD 2.

A2

Agricultural Diversification

On sugar cane land which has been classified as marginal in the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security /MSIRI 2002 Land Suitability Map, and in accordance with the Non-Sugar Sector Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security, 2003-2007, the release of such lands for non-sugar sector agricultural uses should be considered favourably.

In considering such development applications, suitable sites should normally be located:

- outside settlement boundaries, strategic growth clusters or existing village limits;
- outside Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) as defined by the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit;
- outside areas of landscape significance as defined by the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit; and
- should not be required for use for a sugar cane buffer stock as determined by the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security /MSIRI and the private sector.

Such developments should broadly follow the design principles set out in the Industry in the Countryside Design Guidance.

Justification: The recommendations of the Non-Sugar Sector Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security, 2003-2007 envisage a reorientation of the non-sugar sector towards a more technology-based approach to achieve a measure of self-sufficiency, to meet increased quality standards, to develop agro-processing, promote entrepreneurship, optimise export opportunities, ensure conformity to international food safety norms and maximise potential benefits from regionalisation.
The Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security Non-Sugar Sector Strategic Plan is an important component in determining and locating agricultural/farming diversification projects within revised Outline Schemes in the context of the National Development Strategy, and national socio-economic priorities. The adoption of intensive cultivation practices based on modern practices has become essential in optimising agricultural productivity within available land resources and increasing urbanisation.

Where sugar cane land has been classified as marginal in accordance with Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security /MSIRI 2002 Land Suitability Map, and does not fall into one of the above categories and is located outside major settlements, strategic growth clusters or existing village limits, there will be a presumption in favour of agricultural diversification schemes including hydroponics agricultural schemes. Such developments should broadly follow the design principles set out in the Industry in the Countryside Design Guidance.

4.7 Mineral Resources

MR 1

Protection of Mineral Resources

Mineral resource sites as shown on the Development Management Map should be protected from most forms of development. Such sites hold reserves which are important to the national economy and for the building construction sector. Buffer zones of 1km should be established between such sites and sensitive uses including housing, education and health facilities as well as from boundaries of catchment areas of dams and reservoirs.

There should be a general presumption against development likely to undermine the long term quarrying capability, unless and in the national interest or is a Government approved scheme which has already been identified or committed or where suitable alternatives are not available.

Priority quarry areas identified by the Ministry of Environment and NDU and their buffer zones of 200 metres from the quarry boundaries will be protected from all types of development. Temporary undertakings may be allowed outside the 200 metres buffer zone up to 1 km from the quarry boundaries, subject to relevant permits and licences being obtained from statutory authorities.

Temporary development may be allowed on a potential mineral site and its 1 km buffer subject to relevant permits and licenses being obtained from statutory authorities. Any proposal for permanent development on potential
mineral sites and within the 1 km buffer may be considered based on site investigations carried out in line with the methodology developed by the Ministry of Environment and NDU and demonstration that these sites do not have significant quarry potential in terms of quality and quantity of rocks and their economic exploitability. The site investigation report will be examined by a Technical Committee set up by the Ministry of Environment and NDU, with a view to recommend to the Ministry whether the site needs to be retained for quarrying or released for other developments.

The final decision of the Ministry of Environment and NDU shall prevail over the provisions of the Outline Scheme in respect of that potential mineral resource site.

All temporary development shall be subject to termination upon issue of prior notice, when the site will be required for quarry operations. No claim for compensation or liability for damages from the Government of Mauritius would be entertained at closure of operations to allow for quarry activities.

**Justification:** Since sand extraction from the lagoon was ceased in Mauritius in 2001, terrestrial deposits of sand, building aggregate, crushed rock and other raw construction materials are the only source of supply. To ensure future demand from the construction sector can be met the Ministry responsible for Environment has carried out a detailed study to identify the level of resources available, so as to provide adequate protection for proven sites. The study identified two categories of mineral resource sites, respectively priority sites and potential sites. For the priority sites the consultants had fully investigated them with respect to quality of rocks and had determined that they were viable for rock quarrying. The priority sites will be highlighted on the Development Management Maps. As for the potential sites, the quality and quantity of rocks were not determined by the consultants.

Given that the resources will need to be extracted or quarried at varying times in the future, buffer zones which separate sensitive uses from the potential bad neighbour aspects of quarrying or extraction are recommended to protect both the resource and residents. **Further guidance is provided in policy ID 4 and Industrial Development Design Guidance.**

**4.8 Tourism**

The coastal area within the District is an important national asset both with regard to the national economy through the tourism sector and as an attractive and fragile environment. Both aspects of the coast are interlinked – the quality of the natural environment is an integral component in the continuing success and growth of the tourism industry. Sustainable management and maintenance of development within the sensitive coastal environment is the basis of the policies below.
4.8.1 Coastal Development and Tourism

CDT 1

Coastal Development and Tourism

On the coast within Tourism Zones identified in the Tourism Development Plan and shown as growth zones on the Development Strategy Map and Development Management Map, clustering of tourism and other employment-generating activities within or adjacent to existing settlements, resorts and campement sites and utility and transport networks should be encouraged.

In Grand Port Savanne District Council Area major new developments should be focussed within the Mahebourg Tourism Zone, where Tourism Action Area Plans and other Government-approved schemes have been identified and committed. In this Zone and where sites are within or adjacent to existing settlement boundaries, tourist resort complexes or major campement sites, there should be a general presumption in favour of mixed use tourism and other forms of complementary employment creation.

Proposals should generally comply with the design criteria contained within the Hotels and Integrated Resorts Design Guidance and other relevant Design Guidance outlined in SD 5. Developments within the Coastal Lands should also conform to detailed coastal development design principles defined in the Design Guidance.

Justification: The Mahebourg Tourism Zone from Vieux Grand Port south via Mahebourg to Blue Bay) was identified by the Ministry responsible for Tourism within the Tourism Development Plan 2002. Clustering of development within Tourism Zones would support the objectives of the NDS and provide more sustainable development patterns, support existing local communities and build on existing transport and utility provision whilst enabling parts of the coastline to remain open and in their natural state through environmental management plans.

Further development guidance is provided within the Hotels and Integrated Resorts Design Guidance and the Residential Design Guidance. More stringent design parameters have been devised to ensure sustainable development occurs in such sensitive locations. In all cases of major development on the coast, building and land use permit applications may be required to include a comprehensive EIA in accordance with the Environment Protection Act 2002.
CDT 2

Conservation and Tourism

Within approved Tourism Zones but outside of existing settlement boundaries, resort complexes and major campement sites and outside Tourism Zones, in open coastal and countryside locations, particularly where agricultural, environmental and landscape considerations are of significance, there should be a general presumption against major new development, unless and in the national interest or where a Government-approved scheme has already been identified and committed, or suitable alternatives are not available. In these cases the full environmental, social and transport costs of the new location and the alternatives considered should form an integral part of the decision-making process.

In locations in and adjacent to settlement boundaries as shown on the Development Management Maps, either within or outside the Tourism Zones, there should be a general presumption in favour of small scale developments where these can be shown to sustain local economies, especially where changes due to restructuring and diversification in the sugar sector are envisaged or where fishing and/ or sand mining activities have ceased. In the South Coast Heritage Zone support should also be given to more specialised growth and conservation opportunities. Proposals should generally conform to detailed coastal development design principles defined in the Design Guidance.

For the purposes of this policy the South Coast Heritage Zone is defined as being a strip of approximately 80m of coastal frontage land above the high water mark (HWM) consistent with the Pas Geometriques. In this context reference should also be made to policy CDT 4.

Developments within the Coastal Lands areas should conform to detailed coastal development design principles defined in the Design Guidance.

Justification: The South Coast Heritage Zone (within the District from Blue Bay to Butte aux Sables to Beau Champ) was identified by the Ministry responsible for Tourism within the Tourism Development Plan 2002. The South Coast Heritage Zone is defined as being a strip of approximately 80m of coastal frontage land above the high water mark (HWM) consistent with the Pas Geometriques. In this context reference should also be made to policy CDT 4.

Within this Zone but outside settlement boundaries and on land on the open coast and countryside there should be a general presumption against major development except in cases of national interest or where a Government-approved scheme has already been identified and committed and other suitable
alternatives are not available as provided for under SD 4. A sequential approach should be considered for the release of sites in these areas. Criteria should focus on maintaining land of suitability for agriculture as defined by the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries, including use of land for sugar cane and non-sugar sector uses. Other factors should include protecting land with environmental sensitivity or landscape significance as defined by the Ministry responsible for Environment.

Unless it can be demonstrated that proposals including national-interest proposals can be integrated with existing settlements and activities and transport and utility networks and can contribute to the enhancement and maintenance of the surrounding environment including wetlands, mangroves and lagoons, major new developments should not normally be permitted.

Where small scale developments are proposed on land within or adjoining settlement boundaries within the Tourism Zones, or in open coastal or countryside locations, there should be a general presumption in favour of new schemes where it can be shown that they meet local needs and can contribute to the sustainability of local economies. Such principles should also apply to more specialised growth and conservation proposals in the South Coast Heritage Zone.

CDT 3

Integrated Resort Schemes and Real Estate Schemes

Integrated resort schemes (IRS) and Real Estate Schemes (RES) should follow the sequential approach and clustering principles outlined in the Strategic Development policies and Policy CDT 1. Where sites are located outside settlement boundaries and Tourism Zones, proposals should conform to the principles of CDT 2.

Integrated resort schemes should aim to provide:

- significant socio-economic benefits to the community through investment and employment creation and the use of planning agreements;
- a mixture of uses to create a vitality and diversity and to reduce the need to travel by providing for example a balance of hotel, tourism, recreation, leisure, residential and commercial development and social and community facilities;
- safe and efficient transport infrastructure and utility services in compliance with the specifications of the relevant authorities;
• a high standard of urban and landscape design in accordance with Hotel and Integrated Resort Design Guidance and other relevant guidance outlined in SD 5, with self regulatory “Cahier des Charges”;  
• an environmental management plan which includes mechanisms to protect and sustain environmentally sensitive areas within and adjoining the site and public access to open space, green spaces and the coast.

Real Estate Schemes should be developed as follows:

• Freehold land of an extent of at least 1 Arpent but not exceeding 10 hectares (23.69 Arpents).  
• Extent of land used for development of a residential property (a single unit) within the real estate development must not exceed 1.25 arpents  
• A mixture of uses including commercial, leisure as well as day-to-day management services such as security, maintenance, gardening, solid waste and household services

Justification: With continued demand and increasing prices for land directly on the coast, Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) are coming under more direct and indirect pressure from development. At the same time the tourism and real estate industry are striving to introduce new development models which inter alia aim to retain a site’s natural image whilst enabling new facilities to be introduced such as golf courses within the overall hotel or resort complex in order to remain competitive in the global economy.

Such developments termed integrated resort schemes (IRS) are designed to comprise a mix of uses – a residential component, hotels, golf courses and other leisure, commercial/retailing as well as local community and social facilities. They can generate a range of employment opportunities including jobs for the unskilled / semi-skilled workforce and may be able to offer employment opportunities for those leaving the sugar industry.

The policy for integrated resort projects thus recognises that clustering of such development can assist in regenerating settlements, where it is based on strong sustainable development principles and integrated with existing communities to provide a range of benefits. In responding to these new market requirements the introduction of a new hotel cluster at Bel Ombre along the south coast of Mauritius has generated substantial inward investment into a community whose agricultural base had been under threat.

The Real Estate Schemes aim at democratising the economy by providing development opportunities to small and medium land owners to participate in the
real estate market. Both RES and IRS should be considered in close consultation with the Board of Investment and any other relevant authorities.

Integrated resort schemes, if carefully designed, can also facilitate the management and enhancement of ESAs (through for example environmental stewardship mechanisms) thus reducing potentially adverse environmental impacts on the fragile ecosystem.

The Hotels and Integrated Resorts and RES Design Guidance should be considered at an early stage in project preparation. Other design guidance – for Residential and Commercial developments should also be consulted as appropriate although integrating the design of the whole scheme is vital if it is to function within its setting. Self-regulating Cahier des Charges would assist in this regard and should form part of the building and land use permit process.

Real Estate Schemes should broadly follow the guidance provided in the Planning Policy Guidance PPG 1 as subsequently revised. They should complement and support settlement strategies by creating a positive impact on the physical, economic and social environments within which they are located. The siting of RES in view of its scale requires a careful approach. The clustering principle and sequential approach to development outlined in the Strategic Development policies (SD1, SD2, SD3, and SD4) should be followed for RES and proposals should demonstrate how they contribute in maintaining and enhancing the townscape/landscape character of the area.

4.8.2 Campement Sites and Pas Geometriques

CDT 4

Campement Sites and Uncommitted Pas Geometriques Land

Campement sites may be redeveloped for tourism uses within the Tourism Zones following the clustering principle and sequential approach to development outlined in the Strategic Development Policies and CDT 1. Redevelopment of existing campement sites outside of the Tourism Zones and settlement boundaries may be permitted for local needs for residential purposes and in accordance with Policies SD 3, SD 4 and CDT 2.

Where proposed campement site development lies within or adjoins an ESA it should be accompanied by an environmental management plan outlining responsibilities for the management and maintenance of the ESA. Any such development should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment under the Environment Protection Act, 2002 as amended.

Development adjoining ESAs should obtain the prior approval of the Ministry responsible for Environment and should be in accordance with the
policies defined in the Study of Environmentally sensitive Areas (ESAs) in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

On uncommitted Pas Geometriques land outside of settlement boundaries no major new development should be permitted, other than as provided for under policies SD 3, SD 4 and CDT 2. Small-scale developments in these areas should only be permitted where they satisfy relevant authorities' agricultural, environmental and landscape criteria and can be shown to sustain local needs.

Redevelopment of campement sites should be designed and assessed in accordance with design policies and criteria contained in the Hotels and Integrated Resorts Design Guidance applying to Coastal Lands areas and where appropriate in the Residential Design Guidance.

Justification: The leasing system via campement leases has enabled the control of residential and tourism developments along the coast. Redevelopment of campement sites within or on the edge of the Tourism Zones would facilitate tourism activities on large scale coastal sites, provide a mechanism for the management of ESAs and enable efficient use of Government-owned land.

The Pas Geometriques, an 80 metre strip (approximately) of state-owned land located around most of the coast, enables the Government to have an ownership and controlling mechanism for most coastline development. Uncommitted Pas Geometriques land should be protected from major new development allowing valuable coastlines to be retained in their natural state subject to the provisions of policies SD 3, SD 4 and CDT 2.

4.8.3 Marinas and Land-Water based Development

CDT 5

Land-Water Interface Development

Proposals which involve development either within the water or at the interface between land and water, such as marinas, jetties, piers, moorings, development /rehabilitation of existing barachois, aquaculture activities and tourist establishments should be carefully considered in the foreshore areas. All developments listed in the Environment Protection Act 2002 as amended such as construction of marinas, creation of and/or development on barachois, fishing port, construction of breakwaters, groins, jetties, revetments and seawalls, will require an Environmental Impact Assessment licence or Preliminary Environmental Report approval. Clearance from the Ministry responsible for Fisheries and the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands on the ‘in principle’ acceptance of such state land/marine locations should also be obtained.
The clustering principle and sequential approach to development outlined in the Strategic Development policies should be followed for land-water based development. Any development which involves landside (for example restaurant, sailing club facilities, car and boat trailer parking, boat storage, mechanical and boat repair facilities, petroleum and diesel storage and pumping facilities, waste water extraction etc) and water-related development impacts (for example jetties, piers, berths etc) should also consider:

a) the appearance of the development from the waterway and the foreshores;

b) the effect of the development on any environmentally sensitive area or area of landscape significance or a place of heritage significance in the vicinity;

c) whether the development would cause pollution or siltation of the waterway to an extent that would jeopardise any existing or potential uses of the waterway;

d) whether the proposed development incorporates environmental stewardship of terrestrial and/or aquatic ecological areas;

e) the impact of any commercial activities on existing settlements’ town centres;

f) traffic impacts including parking;

g) any other relevant management plan, Design Guidance prepared by the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands and Guidance provided by other Ministries including the Ministry responsible for Fisheries and the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries;

h) infrastructure provision, acceptable sewage treatment facilities, disposal of solid waste and waste water, drainage, accidental spillage and other guidance or requirements of the Ministry responsible for Public Utilities, the Ministry responsible for Health and Quality of Life, the Ministry responsible for Environment and National Development Unit and the Waste Water Authority.

Activities and development listed in Schedule Three of this plan should not be permitted on public beaches and should not normally be permitted in Environmentally Sensitive Areas as specified in EC 1 as well as islets and islands unless the proposed development supports the economic vitality of local communities or is considered in the national interest and is acceptable on planning, environmental and transport grounds and is designed sensitively.
The design and assessment of development proposals identified in Schedule Three should broadly comply with the design parameters outlined in the Hotel and Integrated Resort Design Guidance (including that for Coastal Lands development) outlined in SD 5.

Justification: Growth in the tourism sector and changing recreation patterns are placing more demands on the use of the lagoon, the islets and off-shore islands. This is creating demand for marinas and water-based recreation, leisure and tourism activities and such demand is likely to increase over time. The development of such facilities can, if carefully sited, designed and managed add to the attraction of an area, generate employment, support the local economy and add to the water-based experience for Mauritians and visitors.

Key criteria for the design and assessment of a range of land–water interface development listed in Schedule Three include coastal protection, pollution prevention, wastewater disposal and water quality, soil and erosion prevention, air quality, environmental noise and design factors: the Hotel and Integrated Resort Design Guidance outlined in SD 5 contains a detailed checklist of such criteria. An EIA licence from the Ministry responsible for Environment is an integral part of the approval process which aims to address environmental sustainability issues in detail. Given other complex impacts of such developments the views of other relevant Ministries’ in the assessment process should be taken into account.

4.8.4 Public Beaches

Public Beaches and Access

Areas proclaimed as Public Beaches under the Local Government Act are shown on the Development Management Maps. Major development should not normally be permitted except for the provision and improvement of sensitively-designed visitor facilities, local access and enhancement of landscaping that adds to the amenity and public use of the beach. Development adjoining or adjacent to a public beach should maintain road and pedestrian access and safeguard land for future visitor facilities.

Proposed public access to the beach and shore should be identified in applications for coastal morcellement, tourism development, any future leasing arrangements for campement sites or development proposed on the Pas Geometriques. Such public access ways should be protected from development.

Justification: The public beaches provide the main access to the coastline, lagoon and sea along many parts of the coast. Access to the beach is highly...
valued by the Mauritian public and should be safeguarded in locations where intensification of campement sites or tourism development could lead to encroachment and damage to the beach’s visual setting and amenity.

Landscaping and tree clusters at public beaches should be maintained in the form of native species to provide part of the amenity attraction and as funding or planning agreements allow, be enhanced as part of landscaping improvement programmes – rather than being lost for parking for nearby commercial development. For the popular public beaches visitor facilities should be provided but more remote beaches should be left in their undeveloped state.

Given the importance of public beaches as recreation facilities for Mauritians and the pressure to develop along the coast, maintaining suitable access to public beaches has become more difficult. The policy supports the provision, safeguarding and maintenance of public access as part of new or redeveloped coastal tourism sites, through the introduction of IRS schemes and through the process of leasing or renewing of campement sites.

4.9 Environment and Fisheries

Policies within this section relate to two facets of the natural environment:

- **Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)**, which relate to statutory and non-statutory designations: *Environmental Protection (EP) areas* which are areas of nationally-significant ecological value protected by various Acts; and *Environmental Conservation (EC) areas* which are, as yet, not protected by legislation but which are worthy of conservation due to their vulnerability to development. The aim here is to use a precautionary approach when preparing or assessing building and land use permit applications. The significance of these non-statutory conservation areas is likely to be better understood through detailed studies carried out by the Ministry responsible for Environment; and

- **Areas of Landscape Significance (ALS)** which relate to the *Landscape Value* of an area because of its particular quality, setting and function. In some cases such areas may have an ecological function as well as a landscape function such as an *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*; in others the aim should be to preserve an area of landscape in its unbuilt state, including natural sections of the coastline, or provide a strategic gap between settlements.
4.9.1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

Environmental Protection

EP 1

Protection of National Parks

National Parks have been proclaimed (within the District) at Black River Gorges and the island and islets of Ilot Flamants, Ile aux Oiseaux, Ile aux Fous, Ile aux Fouquets, Ilet Vacoas and part of Ile de la Passe under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1993 and are shown on the Development Strategy Map and Development Management Map. The Black River Gorges National Park is also the focus of the Ministry responsible for Tourism's South West Natural Zone.

National Parks should be protected from development except as allowed under the Act, conservation management plans prepared or being prepared for each island or islet by the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security and Fisheries' National Park and Conservation Service, or for educational purposes, visitor facilities or in the national interest. Development in National Parks which would destroy or adversely affect the area’s natural environment should not normally be permitted.

Actions should be taken to extend the provisions of the Black River Gorges National Park to include Private Mountain Reserves within the Savanne and Vacoas Mountains including Tamarin Falls.

Justification: The Black River Gorges National Park is of national ecological importance and has been successful in protecting primary and marginal habitat which has aided in sustaining some of the country’s rare and endangered species particularly the echo parakeet, the Mauritian kestrel and the pink pigeon. This National Park is also a major visitor attraction for Mauritians as well as tourists. It should be protected to ensure the sustainability of the country’s ecological assets are maintained and enhanced.

The National Park and Wildlife Act allows for some development supporting educational, leisure and tourism needs as well as for that development which is in the national interest. Visitor facilities, nature trails and research facilities are a necessary part of the operations of the Black River Gorges National Park thus such forms of sustainable development are anticipated over the time frame of this Outline Scheme.

Where small scale developments are proposed on land within or adjoining National Parks, there should be a general presumption in favour of new schemes
where it can be shown that they meet local needs and can contribute to the sustainability of local economies. Such principles are consistent with more specialised growth and conservation proposals outlined by the Ministry of Tourism for the South West Natural Zone.

Proposals to expand the Black River Gorges National Park to include adjoining Nature Reserves and privately owned Mountain Reserves should be pursued to ensure all nationally-important ecological areas are protected and managed.

Conservation management plans for the islands and islets being prepared by the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries and development defined under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1993 may involve eco-tourism development where no adverse ecological or environmental impacts are expected. Some forms of eco-tourism development are capable of co-existing with ecologically significant areas and may, through environmental stewardship mechanisms, assist with the protection and maintenance of nationally important sites.

Any development should be prepared and assessed in conjunction with the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Environment and Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands.

EP 2

Protection of Nature Reserves and Mountain Reserves

All Nature Reserves including the off-shore islands of Ile aux Aigrettes, Ile Marianne and Rocher des Oiseaux and Mountain Reserves designated under the Forests and Reserves Act and shown on the Development Management Maps should be protected from development except as allowed under the said Act, or for educational purposes, visitor facilities or in the national interest or in the case of the off-shore island nature reserves as allowed under the conservation management plans which have been or are being prepared by the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries’ National Park Conservation Service. Development in protected Nature Reserves which would destroy or adversely affect the area’s natural environment should not normally be permitted unless supported by an approved environmental management plan and an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the EPA (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2006.

Justification: The purpose of this policy is to protect nationally-significant ecological areas and to assist in preserving the natural environmental heritage as defined under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1993. In accordance with Conservation Management Plans being prepared for off-shore island Nature
Reserves by the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries, new proposals may involve eco-tourism development where no adverse ecological or adverse environmental impacts are expected. Some forms of eco-tourism development are capable of co-existing with ecologically significant areas and may, through environmental stewardship mechanisms, assist with the protection and maintenance of nationally important sites.

Proposed development on off-shore island Nature Reserves should be prepared and assessed in conjunction with the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Environment and Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands.

EP 3

Protection of River Valleys and Water Resources

River Reserves as defined by the Forests and Reserves Act means:

“(a) where there is an escarpment, the land extending from the edge of a watercourse to the top of the escarpment;

(b) where there is no escarpment, the land extending from the edge of a watercourse to a distance measured on the horizontal plane –

(i) in the case of a river, of 16 metres;
(ii ) in the case of a rivulet, of 8 metres;
(iii) in the case of a feeder, of 3 metres.”

Rivers and rivulets the subjects of River Reserves are listed in the Fourth Schedule to the Act.

All River Reserves should normally be protected from development. Exceptions may be made for works deemed essential for water abstraction, flow regulation, flood control and for road crossings.

Clearing and replanting of river reserves shall only be carried out with authorization from the Conservator of Forests

Justification: Given the importance of water resources nationally and in the District careful consideration is required where development is proposed in the vicinity of rivers and rivulets because banks are easily damaged and there is a risk of pollution. Many of the watercourses also act as landscape or ecological corridors and some have recreation potential. Placing any structure within an area that might flood during an extreme weather event may result in a restriction in the flow characteristics of the watercourse and cause unacceptable flooding to occur in other areas.
EP 4

Marine Protected Areas

In addition to the requirements under the Environment Protection Act 2002 and the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 1998, the aims and objectives of Blue Bay Marine Park and as shown on the Development Management Map should be acknowledged in the assessment of any development which may affect the operations and environmental functions of such Marine Parks.

Similarly Fishing Reserves proclaimed under the said 1998 Act located in Grand Port District – the Grand Port Fishing Reserves Zones A and B should be acknowledged in the assessment of any development which may affect the operations and environmental functions of such Reserves.

Development proposals should conform to the general and specific provisions of the Regulations made under Sections 7(3) and 73 applicable to Blue Bay Marine Park as shown on the zoning map of the Blue Bay Marine Park Inset Plan.

Justification: To ensure land and water-based development does not adversely affect nationally-protected sensitive marine environments. The Fishing Reserves not only protect the livelihood of local fishermen but assist in replenishing fish stocks within the marine ecosystem. The Blue Bay Marine Park has been established to protect the unique marine ecosystem in the Blue Bay area.

The intent of Policy EP 4 is to address the issue of development proposals adjoining or within the marine protected areas and to assist in the on-going protection of the Fishing Reserves and Marine Park.

Environmental Conservation

EC 1

Conservation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

Further to more detailed identification, mapping and classification of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) by the Ministry responsible for Environment and in addition to any requirements under the Environment Protection Act 2002, the natural functions, biodiversity, habitat and amenity of ESAs should be protected from adverse effects of development.

The ESA study has assessed the relative importance of different ESAs for their long term maintenance of their integrity. Each ESA type has been categorized on their sensitivity in maintaining environmental functions and
provides sufficient flexibility in proposed land uses to strike a balance between environmental protection and sustainable development needs.

Where the ESAs are indicated on the Development Management Maps there should be a general presumption against development other than for educational or environmental management purposes or in order to sustain local economies or where development is deemed to be in the national interest and is acceptable on planning and environmental grounds. In case of discrepancy between the ESAs shown on the DMM and the ESA map at the Ministry of Environment, the project proponent should consult the Ministry of Environment.

Any development proposed within ESAs will be required to first obtain an Environmental Impact Assessment licence under the Environment Protection Act 2002 as subsequently amended, prior to seeking a building and land use permit.

Development adjoining ESAs should obtain the prior approval of the Ministry responsible for Environment and should be in accordance with the policies defined in the Study of Environmentally sensitive Areas (ESAs) in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Opportunities for the sustained management of ESAs, which may form part of developments, should be pursued through planning agreement/obligation mechanisms. In all such cases, proposals for development within or adjoining Environmentally Sensitive Areas will need to demonstrate how they contribute to maintaining and enhancing the environmental character of the area and that they comply with relevant criteria in the Design Guidance outlined in SD5.

For the purposes of this Policy, ESAs are defined as follows:

- State Lands including State Forest Lands and privately-owned Mountain Reserves;
- Habitat for Endemic Flora and Fauna - which have strong links to the Reserves identified in Policy EP 1;
- Mountain Slopes and Range Peaks – for moderately steep to steep/very steep hillsides and mountain slopes and ridgelines;
- Coastal Features - including parts of the coastline, sand beaches and dunes, mud flats, offshore islets and coastal wetlands and mangroves;
- Water Resources - major aquifers, surface water catchment areas and identified reservoirs/dams, lakes, upland marsh and boreholes and existing weirs; and
Geological Features - the location of lava tubes and pits and caves which are associated with cave networks and groundwater supplies.

**Justification**: ESAs represent national environmental assets and their on-going management, protection and enhancement is vital if sustainable development goals are to be achieved. The intent of policy EC 1 is to reinforce a general presumption against major development in or adjacent to identified ESAs. The adoption of a precautionary approach to development is considered appropriate; the policy also incorporates the principles of Policies SD 2, SD 3 and SD 4 requiring additional environmental information for developments when considered necessary to inform the decision-making process.

The management of ESAs is achievable within this policy through permitting environmental management measures in sensitive locations. This should enable private sector management of ESAs, some good examples of which currently exist in tourism developments in the Eastern Tourism Zone where longer term maintenance, monitoring and enhancement measures have been put in place.

Developers and project promoters are advised to consult the ESA map at the Ministry of Environment and NDU early in the process of project design for information on the location, category and opportunities/restraints of particular ESAs as per the ESA map.

**EC 2**

Conservation of Water Resources

The existing and proposed dams/reservoirs and their catchment areas and the rivers that supply water into them should be safeguarded against pollution, erosion and deforestation. Development within 30 metres of the high water level of the dams and adjacent to rivers, rivulets and streams, open canals or within the catchment areas should not normally be permitted, unless the developer has obtained written agreement from the Water Resources Unit/Ministry of Public Utilities (WRU/MPU) and the Sanitary Authority that the proposals do not pose a threat to the quality or quantity of surface or groundwater resources. A passage 1 metre wide shall be left along one or other side of every canal along its whole length and kept free from obstruction.

No development should be permitted within a 200 metre radius of a borehole or spring without consultation and prior written approval of the WRU/MPU.
Justification: The economic treatment of water to render it safe for human consumption is of paramount importance to health and quality of life: any potentially polluting industries should be sited in appropriate locations where a failure to meet the relevant WRU/MPU effluent discharge standards will not jeopardise the nation’s water supply. Regardless of the location of an industry there is still a need to ensure that effluent water treatment plants are provided and operated satisfactorily to ensure that the effluent meets the standards required by the WRU/MPU or Wastewater Management Authority (WMA). Deforestation of catchment areas causes an increased “peakiness” in surface water run-off, as does increasingly dense development, with a consequential increase in the volume of water that will be lost to the sea and a reduced dry season flow rate. Deforestation also exacerbates soil erosion, leading to silting of dams and intakes, more turbid water to be treated and potential harm to the lagoon ecosystems.

Protection of groundwater from contamination is recognised as being very important. The WRU/MPU normally requires a development exclusion zone of 200 metres around all new boreholes, springs and around as many existing boreholes as is practicable. Any development within 200 m of a borehole should not be permitted unless the WRU/MPU has given written confirmation that the proposals pose no threat to the groundwater resources; the WRU/MPU should consider giving a “no objection” response where the area is fully sewered and the development will be connected to a mains sewer.

EC 3

Wetland Conservation

Wetlands have been defined on the Development Management Map in order to prevent development on such sensitive areas. Development should not normally be allowed within wetlands or buffer areas (30 metres from the edge of the wetland) except in cases for educational or environmental management purposes or where in the national interest and is acceptable on planning and environmental grounds.

In view of the valuable functions they serve, the opportunity should be taken to implement wetland restoration and creation projects that are sensitively designed to be self-sustaining and persistent features of the landscape.

Any development proposed to directly adjoin wetlands (or within wetlands as specified above) will be required to first obtain an Environmental Impact Assessment licence under the Environment Protection Act 2002 as amended, prior to seeking a building and land use permit.
The filling in of wetlands should not normally be permitted, unless the proposed development is in the national interest or is located on a small parcel of land or infill site which is required to sustain the local economy and where the majority of the site has already been developed and the remaining smaller portion is not capable of restoration. In these cases clearance should be sought from the Chairman of the National RAMSAR Committee set up under the aegis of the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security and Fisheries.

Justification: For the purposes of this Policy, wetlands are defined in accordance with the definition provided by the National RAMSAR Committee within the Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries which is “... areas of marsh or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water which is static or flowing, fresh or brackish or salt including areas of marine water.”

Wetlands are a water-based ecosystem – they provide a transition zone between terrestrial systems which are mostly dry and aquatic systems which are permanently wet. Being the interface between the two systems they share characteristics of both. Wetlands have both an environmental and an economic function – they are reservoirs of biodiversity, assist in flood control by gradually releasing rainfall and stormwater, enable vegetation to grow which assists in bank and coastline stabilisation and act with mangroves to trap sediment before it enters the marine system where it could adversely affect coral reefs and filter runoff to remove contaminants before they enter groundwater reserves.

The policy thus provides a precautionary approach to development including identifying buffer areas around wetlands to ensure their on-going protection. This is essential given the preparation of the Wetlands Protection Bill which, when enacted, should offer increased protection for this ecological and hydrological resource. In cases of small scale developments proposed on small parcels of land or infill sites identified as wetlands, where these can be shown to have minimal adverse environmental impact and which are needed to sustain local economies, there should be a general presumption in favour of such schemes subject to clearance of the National RAMSAR Committee.

EC 4

Conservation of Islets and Islands

All islets and islands not proclaimed Nature Reserves nor being part of the National Park should be retained in their natural state and there should be a general presumption against development unless for conservation, education or national interest purposes.
If some forms of eco-tourism are proposed within the conservation management plans prepared for islets or islands including improvements and minor expansion of tourist facilities development proposals may be supported if:

a) the unspoilt forests and natural state are retained;
b) they would not generate overcrowding;
c) they broadly conform with design criteria associated with Coastal Lands development criteria outlined in Policy CDT 4;
d) they broadly conform with criteria for land-water interface development outlined in Policy CDT 5;
e) where relevant, they are in accordance with the conservation management plans prepared for each island or islet;
f) they incorporate the management of ESAs through environmental stewardship mechanisms encapsulated in an environmental management plan; and
g) an EIA as required under the Environment Protection Act 2002 has been prepared and an environmental impact licence has been obtained.

Justification: The islands and islets are part of the sensitive lagoon ecosystem and are natural national assets which should be generally protected from development. Some of the smaller islands are incapable of supporting any development as it would detract from the natural views to the island and sea. The Ministry responsible for Agro-Industry and Fisheries, through the National Parks and Conservation Service, is preparing and implementing management plans for the islands and islets and these efforts should be supported to retain and sustain natural resources as well as development when appropriate.

EC 5

Building on Hill Slopes

Generally there should be a presumption against development on very steep slopes (a gradient of 20% or 1 in 5, or above). Structures supporting telecommunications equipment, utility services, roads, recreation facilities and other uses in the national interest may be necessary in such locations but should comply with Policy LS 1 if located in an area of landscape significance such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

On moderately sloping to steep slopes (between 10% and 20%) shown on the Development Management Maps as ‘Mountain Slopes’ and ‘Range
Peaks', there should be a presumption against most forms of development unless:

- It is designed so as to not reduce nor scar the natural landscape qualities of the hill slopes;
- it does not disturb the natural slope stability;
- it is sited and designed in sympathy with rather than dominating the natural character of the hill slopes.

Given the potential need for earthworks, retaining walls, drainage works, driveways and access ways together with a building, proposed development should be designed in accordance with Design Guidance and a geotechnical report from a qualified engineer should be required to form part of the building and land use permit application. An Environmental Impact Assessment will be required for development on mountain slopes as defined by the Environment Protection Act 2002 as amended.

Justification: For steep slopes above 20% gradient no development, unless in the national interest such as infrastructure, utility provision or for defence purposes, should normally be permitted given the substantial earthworks, comprehensive drainage and visual intrusiveness generated by such development and the increased risk of creating landslides.

On moderately sloping to steep slopes, four aspects of development cause concern: visual intrusiveness, slope stability, costs and provision of infrastructure. With regard to visual intrusiveness the height, bulk, scale and colour of materials of the proposed development need to be considered together with its location. Man-made development in a natural environment should be carefully reviewed so that the visual intrusiveness impacts are minimised through sound site design principles and use of appropriate engineering, landscaping and building materials.

Drainage, provision of utility services and earthworks may be necessary to support the structure and if not appropriately designed can cause erosion and siltation through removal of natural vegetation, alter existing drainage characteristics, increase stormwater runoff and restrict groundwater percolation. If not properly managed such development could lead to landslip. As such the information submitted with the building and land use permit application should include a geotechnical report by a qualified engineer on soil characteristics in relation to the risk of landslides, as well as area-wide drainage and sewage treatment proposals, landscaping and erosion mitigation measures. An EIA licence may also be required as specified by the Environment Protection Act 2002.
4.9.2 Areas of Landscape Significance

Landscape Value

LS 1

Conservation of Scenic Landscape Areas

The natural and open character of Scenic Landscape Areas, identified on the Development Management Map, should be protected. Agriculture and forestry-related activities should generally be acceptable in these areas.

Where proposals for tourism, leisure or recreation, or an integrated resort scheme, settlement extension or new settlement adjoin or form part of a Scenic Landscape Area, such developments may be allowed where they are in accordance with the sequential approach to site identification outlined in Policies SD1, SD2, SD3 or SD4.

Where Special Development Areas and Zones have been identified in previous Outline Schemes and commitments made between Government and Landowners, leisure, tourism, recreational, commercial and residential uses may be allowed.

In all such cases, proposals for development within or adjoining Scenic Landscape Areas will need to demonstrate how they contribute to maintaining and enhancing the landscape character of the area and that they comply with relevant criteria in Design Guidance outlined in SD5.

Justification: Because of their open natural physical attributes, some areas whilst consisting of vegetation of limited ecological or natural landscape value, provide interest and character to the countryside, coast or within or on the edge of settlements. Whilst such areas are not worthy of protection on ecological grounds alone, nor are they of outstanding natural beauty, they can contribute to the scenic attributes of built-up areas, the open countryside and the coast and are thus worthy of conservation, consistent with the principle of sustainable development. In all cases, proposals for development in or adjoining a Scenic Landscape Area should show how they contribute to maintaining and enhancing the landscape and conform to design guidance contained in Policy SD 5.

LS 2

Strategic Gaps

A positive approach to the retention, provision, use and treatment of open countryside between settlements should be adopted by safeguarding open land from built development and maintaining its positive contribution in providing a visual and physical break between settlements.
Development should not be permitted if it would contribute to a possible merging of settlements and the creation of urban sprawl or where it would be harmful to the natural, landscaped and/or rural character of areas of land that form belts of countryside around and between settlements.

Opportunities afforded through public private partnerships, collaboration with developers through planning agreements and the use of existing and proposed mechanisms such as the National Environment Fund and the Community Development Fund should be examined where necessary to acquire, replace and maintain valuable green wedges and strategic open spaces particularly between settlements.

Justification: Strategic open spaces play a significant role in sustaining and improving the amenity of settlements in urban and rural areas, attracting new investment, employment opportunities and improving the quality of life of residents and workers. Strategic open space plays an essential role in providing the necessary facilities for a wide range of leisure, educational and recreational activities from formal sporting facilities to walking, sitting, informal play and cultural and entertainment facilities. Open space forms a key part of a District’s landscape, making a contrast with built development and should be conserved and enhanced as part of area-wide planning.

In appropriate cases, the use of public private partnerships and planning agreements should be examined to acquire or replace and maintain valuable green wedges and open spaces, particularly between and within settlements. Existing funding mechanisms such as the Ministry responsible for Environment’s National Environment Fund should be examined in this connection.

4.10 Airport Development

The SSR International Airport is proposed to expand to accommodate expected growth in passenger numbers and air freight. Current planning advice (as detailed in the SSR International Airport Master Plan Technical Report, 2004) indicates under the high scenario 3 forecast some 5.3 million passengers using the airport in 2022 which generally appears similar to previous medium term forecasts ie. there has been a scaling downwards of long term passenger demand forecasts over the last few years.

The Master Plan indicates that whilst these forecasts represent the most realistic estimate of traffic evolution, it is necessary to remain prudent and to prepare appropriate responses in the event of growth over and above this assessment. As a result the proposed master plan layout offers extra development potential at the northern zone of the airport, with both additional capacity provided by a second runway and additional land area (north triangle-long term development -
allowing a new dedicated passenger terminal when the existing and new medium term terminals reach saturation.

The Master Plan for the development of the SSR International Airport shows the land required for the operational areas and all the land-side facilities. These areas need to be safeguarded from development in order to avoid problems and future compensation claims. The expansion of the airport also has implications for future development within the District both in regard to height and noise, but revised restrictions have not yet been brought into force; under these circumstances existing restrictions should continue to be applied by relevant clearance authorities.

IA 1

SSR International Airport Expansion

The land required for the SSR International Airport expansion should be safeguarded and no development that would prejudice the implementation of the Airport Master Plan (2004) should be permitted. The area to be safeguarded is indicated on the Development Strategy Map, the Development Management Map and the Airport Safeguarding Area Restrictions Inset Plan.

Justification: The expansion of the airport is essential for the social and economic prosperity of Mauritius. A 2004 Master Plan for the development of the SSR International Airport has been prepared and this shows the land required for the operational areas and all the land-side facilities. These areas need to be safeguarded from new development in order to avoid future problems and reduce compensation costs.

IA 2

SSR International Airport Safeguarding

The areas subject to building control and restriction around the SSR International Airport are illustrated in detail on the Airport Safeguarding Area Restriction Inset Plan. These include areas affected by existing and future operations and also previously defined safeguarding areas. Five zones have been defined by the competent authority, ie. the Director of Civil Aviation as follows:

Obstacle Limitation Surfaces:

- Approach Areas: no new building or structure is permitted within the Approach Area without a No Objection Certificate from the Director of Civil Aviation
• **Transitional Surface:** there are restrictions on new buildings and structures and hence a No Objection Certificate from the Director of Civil Aviation would be required for development within this zone.

• **Inner Horizontal Surface:** a No Objection Certificate from the Director of Civil Aviation is required for any new development within this zone; the height of any such development is restricted to 100.00m above Mean Sea Level (MSL).

• **Conical Surface:** restrictions vary according to location, however a No Objection Certificate from the Director of Civil Aviation is required for any new development in this zone.

• **Areas Outside Obstacle Limitation Surface:** within a radius of 11 km from the threshold of Runway 14 as shown on the Restriction Inset Plan, any new building or structure exceeding 15.20m in height requires a No Objection Certificate from the Director of Civil Aviation.

**Justification:** For operational, security and safety reasons it is necessary to control the scale and nature of developments within the environs of the SSR International Airport in accordance with the Plaisance Airport (Building Restrictions) Act 1964 and Annex 14 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (1944) which prescribes the Standards and Recommended Practices.

4.11 **Highways and Transport**

TP 1

**Integrating Land Use and Transport**

*Development should be located so it can be served efficiently by public transport, cycling and walking, to maximise accessibility to local facilities and to encourage the reduction in number and length of trips by private car. New developments should be designed to encourage public transport use, bus operation (lay-bys and terminals) and safe and convenient pedestrian access routes where appropriate.*

**Within Growth Zones where Action Area Plans are being prepared measures should be taken which:**

• increase opportunities for integration, by developing (in partnership with public transport operators and the private sector) high quality interchange facilities for buses and other forms of public transport; and

• where feasible, give priority to public transport, walking and in some specific locations cycling in terms of road space and junction design.
New development, including morcellement, proposed in accordance with policies SD 1, SD 2, SD 3 and SD 4 should encourage walking and cycling, by developing networks of safe, direct and attractive routes linking residential areas, schools and other local facilities with settlement centres.

Justification: Transport policy and proposals should support sustainable growth and development, rural regeneration and economy in the use of land. In line with key transport policies within the NDS land use and transport should be integrated such that:

- Development should be planned so that it minimises the need to travel and facilitates safe and convenient movement on foot, by cycle and by public transport;
- Development that attracts large numbers of passenger movements should be focused on sites in Urban Renaissance Zones, Rural Regeneration Zones, Tourism Zones and other large settlement clusters, where potential exists to provide for convenient access by public transport, by cycle and on foot;
- Development which generates large numbers of freight and goods movements should be encouraged to locate or relocate in Special Use Zones or on the edge of settlements in accordance with SD 3 where sites are well-served by the strategic transport network; and
- Development should be planned to enhance the viability of existing and proposed public transport services including services in the countryside especially within Rural Regeneration Zones and on the coast within Tourism Zones.

TP 2

Traffic Assessment

Where developments will have significant traffic implications, Traffic Assessments should be prepared by scheme promoters and submitted alongside the relevant building and land use permit applications. The coverage and detail of the Traffic Assessment should reflect the scale of development and the extent of the traffic implications of the proposal.

For small schemes, the Traffic Assessment should simply outline the traffic aspects of the application including access, parking and safety aspects. For major strategic proposals, the assessment should illustrate how accessibility to the site can be provided by a range of modes and the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site. It should also give details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and in appropriate cases cycling, to reduce the need for parking associated with
the proposal and to mitigate traffic impacts. Evaluation of safe ingress and egress of traffic and pedestrians should be included in the assessment, as well as safe driver sight line distances for vehicles leaving the property and on roadways. Parking provision should reflect the hours of operation, spaces available for public parking and level of public transport provision. Opportunities for shared parking arrangements should also be explored.

Justification: Prospective developers should hold early discussions with the Ministry responsible for Public Infrastructure’s Road Development Authority (RDA) and Traffic Management Unit (TMU) in order to clarify whether proposals are likely to be acceptable in traffic terms and to “scope” the requirements of any Traffic Assessment. Where proposals are clearly in line with planning policy (for instance where they accord with the Growth Zone locations and include measures to improve access by non-car modes) it should increase the likelihood of a building and land use permit being granted without undue delay.

In these circumstances, the relevant agency may want to reduce the requirements and coverage of the Traffic Assessment to deal with those aspects necessary to finalising the scheme.

Traffic assessments enable planning authorities and relevant road traffic and transport agencies better to assess the application and provide a basis for discussion on details of development proposals, such as the level of parking, the siting of buildings and entrances and the need for further measures to improve access arrangements to the site. Details of any firm proposals to improve the access to a site, including committed schemes nearby, should be taken into consideration when assessing the suitability of a site for development.

Major developments comprising a mix of jobs, shopping, leisure and other services should offer a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking and in some cases cycling, as well as by private transport. This should be assessed in terms of how easy it is to get to the site comparing the different modes (taking into account journey times, public transport frequency, quality, safety and access for disabled people).

Such developments should not be designed and located on the assumption that the car will represent the only realistic means of access for the vast majority of people.

Where a development comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services is proposed outside settlement boundaries, the onus should be on the developer to demonstrate why it cannot fit into the preferred locations in accordance with policies SD1, SD2 and SD3 and to illustrate how the accessibility of the proposed development by all modes compares with other possible sites.
TP 3

Access to Major Highways

_No direct access should normally be permitted on M class roads except for acceleration and deceleration lanes._

_Any new vehicular access to/from a Main (Class A or B) Road should be designed with adequate visibility to minimise accident risk and interference with through traffic. Individual plot access should only be permitted if there is adequate turning space on the plot to enable all vehicles to enter and exit in forward gear._

_Developments which would generate large volumes of traffic (especially Heavy Goods Vehicles) on adjoining roads in excess of their reasonable capacity or which would significantly increase accident potential, should not normally be permitted._

_Justification:_ Motorways and Class A and B Main Roads’ prime function is to provide for longer distance journeys. Access directly onto such roads disrupts flows, adds to congestion and can trigger accidents merging vehicles at different speeds. In line with the sequential approach to development outlined in policies SD 1 to SD 4 any development which could increase accident potential on a major highway should not normally be permitted.

It is important that any new or changed access point onto the main road network is carried out to a satisfactory standard. Access arrangements including scale, type and locations of junctions and/or access points should be checked by the relevant highway authority for adequate provision of main road safety both with regard to ingress and egress traffic movements, traffic on the existing road network and pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Where suitable access is available onto a secondary road is available this should be considered. Shared access points can reduce conflict and accident risk and should also be considered for new development.

TP 4

Parking Requirements

_All new developments (or extensions to existing buildings) should be required to make provision for an appropriate number of parking spaces in accordance with updated Design Guidance. In the case of settlement centre sites, developers are encouraged to coordinate and combine the provision of car parking so as to maximise the efficiency and use of the spaces: publicly accessible shared spaces are preferred to a larger number of small private parking lots._
For developments unable to park all of the expected cars on site and where no opportunity exists to combine parking onto a shared public parking area even with a financial contribution to a communal parking area, the permitting authority may allow the development if it can be demonstrated that the shortfall can be accommodated in a satisfactory manner without giving rise to traffic hazards or, by reason of the nature, operational or functional aspects of the use or hours of operation the proposed use would not generate the parking demand or requirements specified.

Justification: Parking is an integral component of development and should be generally considered as an essential element in the design and layout of a new development. For most forms of development parking should be considered within the plot boundary; however in certain situations communal parking areas are desirable – particularly in settlement centres where benefits to overall parking provision, vehicle flows, pedestrian safety and streetscape are a more desirable solution than individual use provision. The updated Design Guidance for Residential, Commercial and Industrial Developments contain parking parameters including locational criteria, design considerations, driver and pedestrian safety and options for shared parking arrangements.

In Action Areas consideration should be given to the use of public/private sector partnerships and planning agreements to provide communal parking facilities particularly in town centres.

In other situations where circumstances dictate that parking specified within the parking standards is excessive (for example due to number of employees, type of use, hours of operation, some on-street parking being available that would not cause a traffic hazard), exceptions to parking provision may be warranted.

**TP 5**

**South Eastern Highway**

*The South Eastern Highway has been constructed on a new alignment from the existing M1/A10 near Plaine Magnien in a north-easterly direction to B28 near the Ferney Community Centre (5.53km), with an intermediate junction with B7 at Grand Bel Air.*

Direct access to the Trunk Road/Highway from adjacent land should not be encouraged and access from individual plots should only be allowed subject to the agreement of RDA and in compliance with TP 3 above.

Justification: The construction of the South Eastern Highway was included in the National Development Strategy (NDS) for the provision of strategic transport improvements to assist in the development and regeneration of areas of the
island including Rural Regeneration Zones and Tourism Zones. It will facilitate improved linkages between the Airport towards the Eastern Tourist Zone.

TP 6

Bypass to Mahebourg

A southern bypass of Mahebourg to link the A10 Phoenix - Mahebourg highway eastwards to the B87 Pointe D'Esny Coastal Road has been constructed. Direct access to the new bypass from adjacent development should not be encouraged and access from individual plots should only be allowed subject to the agreement of RDA and in compliance with TP 3 above.

Justification: Mahebourg was identified as a Tourism Zone in the Tourism Development Plan including the Mahebourg Waterfront and Blue Bay areas, and was endorsed in the NDS. Further morcellements are proposed south of the town centre towards Beau Vallon and Pointe D'Esny, whilst the Master Plan for the future expansion of SSRI Airport calls for land safeguarding to the north of the existing airport for an emergency/second runway which may lead to a need to relocate the existing connector road from the A10 to Blue Bay for safety reasons.

The new route provides a development edge south of Mahebourg with improved access from the national motorway network via the A10 to Blue Bay and Pointe D'Esny tourism and resort areas including Ile aux Aigrettes Nature Reserve; and provides an alternative means of access between the A10 and the Blue Bay area in the event SSRI airport expansion precludes future use of existing connections.

Where appropriate sections of the scheme should be brought forward for implementation through public-private partnering arrangements and planning agreements with the beneficiary land owners as part of rural regeneration initiatives in relation to demand for new development sites in and around designated growth zones.

TP 7

Upgrading of Existing Trunk Roads and Other Roads

Improvements should be provided to the A10 from Plaine Magnien to Rose Belle and A9 from Souillac to Nouvelle France and also along the coastal roads – B28, B8 and B9 as new development proceeds and planning agreements can be introduced.

Alongside Government resources, wherever possible, in conjunction with the development or redevelopment of adjacent sites, the opportunity
should be taken to improve the alignment, sight-lines or provide street lighting, a shoulder or footway as appropriate. The measures should focus on improving road safety and priority should be given to those sections with significant pedestrian volumes.

**Individual accesses should not be allowed: accesses should be combined and located to minimise interference with through traffic and to reduce accident risk.**

**Justification:** Measures should be taken to improve traffic capacity and safety through local widening and realignments where required to provide a standard cross-section of 7m, with 1.5m shoulders in rural areas and with footways (on at least one side) in settlements or where there is significant or contiguous frontage development and/or pedestrian activity.

The traffic carrying capacity of these main traffic routes can also be improved through the restriction of access and the progressive elimination of on-street parking and the provision of bus bays and off-street parking areas.

**TP 8**

**Safeguarding of Ex-railway Track**

*Land forming part of the ex-railway track and grounds which has a reasonable prospect of re-use for transport services in the foreseeable future should be safeguarded from building development in the District Council Area. Such applications should be determined on a case-by-case basis by the relevant authorities.*

**Justification:** This land may be required in the future for the implementation of transport services and extensions including new modes of travel such as the alternative mode of transport (AMT), especially to serve the conurbation, new growth areas and settlement extensions. Experience elsewhere has shown that once such rights of way are lost to development, more efficient forms of transport provision to serve growing centres of population and jobs are often precluded. In order not to sterilise too much land however, both in rural as well as urbanised locations, especially where other forms of employment-creating development are much sought-after, each application for development affecting ex-railway track lands should be considered on its merits by the Ministry responsible for Land Transport and the Ministry responsible for Housing and Lands.
4.12 Infrastructure and Utilities

ST 1

Sewerage Systems

Major developments adjacent to areas with mains sewers should be connected to the sewerage system and associated treatment works and served by sewerage reticulation.

Major developments adjacent to or likely to affect Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), or in Coastal Lands locations or within 1 km from the mean high water mark (MHWM) should be provided with a sewerage system or be connected to a centralised sewage treatment plant. Other developments should be laid out in a manner that will allow the later provision of mains sewers in an economical and efficient manner. Layouts should broadly conform to Design Guidance outlined in SD 5.

Justification: Contamination of groundwater resources is recognised as being a significant threat to the water supply of Mauritius and it is imperative that this resource is afforded the maximum protection possible. The current Sewerage Master plan includes for the possible provision of a sewerage system for Mahebourg but there are no current proposals for sewerage provision in any of the other settlements within the District.

New morcellements and other developments in and around the bigger settlements of Surinam/Souillac, Chemin Grenier and Rivière des Anguilles should be laid out in such a way that will facilitate their connection to the mains sewerage system in the future. Other developments should be laid out in such a way that will facilitate the provision of sewerage in the future; for example by laying out plots in such a way that would allow sewers to run with the natural ground slopes and avoid, as far as possible, the need for sewage pumping stations.

In or adjacent to Environmentally Sensitive Areas and in Coastal Lands locations consideration needs to be given to requiring the developer of major schemes to install a comprehensive sewerage system and connecting this to a sewage treatment plant. Such a system needs to be designed in conjunction with the WMA to ensure that it is fully consistent with any plans for future sewerage provision to the wider area.

The developer should be required to provide full details of how the system will be operated and maintained.
Further guidance is provided in Design Guidance outlined in SD 5.

**ST 2**

**Sites for Sewage Treatment Works**

*Sites for sewage treatment work close to urban areas and major settlements in the countryside and on the coast need to be safeguarded from future development. Buffer zones for all sewage treatment works should conform to those contained in the Industrial Design Guidance.*

*Justification:* The Wastewater Management Authority has a target of connecting at least 80% of the population of Mauritius to a sewerage system and sewage treatment works by 2020 with an intermediate target of connecting 50% of the population by 2010. There are relatively few sites where it will be economically viable to construct sewage treatment facilities. Consideration is being given to the provision of a sewerage system in Mahebourg although no specific site for a sewage treatment works has yet been identified. Such sites as are identified by the WMA need to be safeguarded from development. Also such facilities are considered to be “bad neighbour” developments and new works need to be located away from residential and other sensitive land uses as outlined in ID 4.

**ST 3**

**Treating Effluent from Polluting Industries**

*All industries that produce potentially polluting effluent must be required to provide an appropriately designed and maintained effluent treatment plant. Industrial effluent must not be connected to septic tank systems.*

*Justification:* Generally due to the extreme vulnerability of the water supply aquifer that extends under most of the District it would be preferable that no potentially polluting industry be located other than in an area served by a centralised sewerage system. If, in the national interest, it is essential that potentially polluting industries be located in areas not served by centralised sewerage systems, then the industry itself should be required to provide and maintain a full treatment works to ensure the effluent meets WMA and other relevant authority standards required for discharge to the environment. Septic tank systems would not be acceptable for treating industrial effluents.
ST 4

Septic Tanks and Soakaways

*Where centralised sewerage systems are not available or viable, septic tank sewage treatment systems should be required. Written approval of the design of the proposed sewage disposal system should be obtained from the WMA prior to issue of a building and land use permit.*

*No subsequent change to the number of residential units on, or use of, a plot should be permitted unless approval of the sewage disposal system is again obtained from the WMA.*

*Given the higher risk of contamination of groundwater in Coastal Lands locations or in high groundwater areas or on less permeable ground and as advised by the WMA, development proposed in such areas should provide leaching fields as part of the sewage disposal system. Written approval of the design of this type of sewage disposal should also be obtained from the WMA prior to issue of a building and land use permit. The location and design of septic tanks and soakaways should broadly conform with Design Guidance and their construction supervised and controlled by relevant authorities to ensure that they are properly built and maintained.*

*Justification*: Properties in un-sewered areas are generally served by on-plot septic tanks and soakaways or leaching fields (required in Coastal Lands areas, high groundwater areas and on less permeable ground particularly). Many of the installed septic tank systems have been poorly designed and constructed and consequently contribute to pollution of adjacent properties, water courses and potentially the important groundwater and surface water resources.

The practice of constructing a septic tank system sized for a single residential unit and then connecting several apartments or housing units to it should be discouraged; in many instances it is likely that the constructed facilities provide practically no treatment and are little better than pit-latrines.

Septic tank systems can treat sewage to a reasonable standard and where the soil conditions are suitable they are appropriate means of treatment in relatively low density and scattered developments. It is important that they are properly designed, constructed and maintained if the environment and groundwater resources in particular, are to be protected.

Special care is needed when designing septic tank systems in higher density developments and in areas of particularly permeable or impermeable soils. The WMA has design guidelines which have been incorporated into Design Guidance outlined in SD 5. Any departure from the existing criteria for the siting of septic
tank and absorption pit with regard to location and plot size and specific circumstances will need to be referred to WMA on a case to case. Basis. Adequately-resourced building regulation inspection teams should be set-up and operationalised to enable and monitor this construction and approval process.

**DR 1**

**Drainage Systems**

*All major developments should provide appropriate systems to ensure that they are adequately drained, that neighbouring developments are not adversely affected and the cumulative drainage implications for the wider catchment area are taken into account in the planning of new schemes. Drainage systems should broadly conform with Design Guidance outlined in SD 5.*

*Justification:* Drainage systems and discharges from developments need to be properly designed to ensure that they are adequate to protect the development from the effects of all but the most extreme rainfall events whilst avoiding creating problems for nearby properties and/or damage to the environment. The areas that might flood during an extreme rainfall event should be identified through site visits and studies and the development planned to minimise potential adverse effects.

Catchment areas for each stream, rivulet or river should be determined and use should be made of these natural courses to channel water through the development as far as possible; roadside drainage should only be used to channel water from relatively small catchment areas, of 2 to 6ha (for ground slopes of between 0 and 6%).

**SW 1**

**Sites for Landfill**

*Sites for new landfill and for other types of solid waste disposal should be protected from development. The buffer area around the existing waste disposal site at Mare Chicose should continue to be protected.*

*In respect of buffer zones for such bad neighbour developments, reference should also be made to the provisions of Policy ID 4 and Industrial Design Guidance.*

Sites for proposed landfills will be required to undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the EPA 2002 as amended, a Social Impact Assessment as well as a Traffic Impact Assessment.
Justification: The existing waste disposal site at Mare Chicose is nearing the end of its life. Studies are being conducted to ascertain if it is viable to extend the site. Meanwhile the Ministry responsible for Local Government has also requested proposals from landowners to make land available for the construction of new landfill sites: such facilities should require a comprehensive EIA to be prepared. Landfill facilities are considered to be “bad neighbour” developments and need to be located away from residential and other sensitive land uses. Wherever possible, such sites together with other ‘bad neighbour’ developments should be clustered within an industrial/utility development on a well-accessed site where buffer zones up to 1 km can be established from sensitive land uses. The Industrial Design Guidance contains guidelines on buffer zones for Landfill sites.

E 1

Sites for New Power Stations

To sustain increased industrial activity and other development throughout the country new power supplies will be required over the planning period. The CEB continues to request proposals from the private sector to construct additional power generation facilities. Potential sites, once identified, should be safeguarded from development and in planning new developments in adjacent areas consideration should be given to the establishment of a buffer zone around such a bad neighbour development, in accordance with Policy ID 4 and the Industrial Design Guidance.

Development proposals for new power stations will be required to include a comprehensive EIA in accordance with the EPA 2002 as amended.

Justification: The Central Electricity Board (CEB) anticipates that a large proportion of their increasing electricity requirements will be met by independent power providers (IPP); it is probable that private sector power stations will rely upon burning bagasse and coal in the non-harvest season and consequently new stations will need to be sited adjacent to sugar factories. Requests for proposals for new power stations are continually being made by the CEB and there is the potential for one to be constructed somewhere in the District. If the Grand Port area is developed then it is possible that a coal fired power station may be constructed in the same area so as to make use of berthing and coal handling facilities.

E2

Construction of Overhead Power Lines

Construction of new High Voltage (HV) overhead power lines should not normally be permitted across areas of environmental sensitivity or landscape significance, or within 13 metres of existing developments,
subject to consideration of factors such as topography and vegetation. Installation of high tension lines in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) will require an Environmental Impact Assessment Licence in accordance with the EPA 2002 as amended.

Justification: It is important to retain the integrity of areas of environmental sensitivity and landscape significance and to protect existing development from the industrial wirescape that results from close proximity to HV pylons and cables. A way-leave is required for such power lines (approximately 26 metres), which needs to be accessible and maintained clear of trees, which consequently leaves an open swathe through the countryside.

GI 1

Service Corridors

The need for service corridors and rights of way for water supply, power cable and telecommunications cable networks and other services should be incorporated into the design stage for major development projects and be reflected in the construction of the development. The design and setbacks required to accommodate service corridors should conform to Design Guidance outlined in SD 5.

Justification: It is essential that corridors for the erection of overhead lines and for laying underground cables and pipes are identified during the planning stage of major new developments. Generally it is preferable to install the water supply pipes, medium and low voltage power lines and telephone lines along road reserves and these should be sufficiently wide, with buildings set back from the side of the road reserves to allow adequate clearance to cables. High voltage electricity lines will generally need to cross over third party land and permission for major developments should be conditional upon the utility providers being able to obtain necessary wayleaves. The CEB has stated that where a development requires the relocation of power supply infrastructure including undergrounding of cables then the cost of doing so should be met by the developer. For safety reasons underground power cables should be kept separate from other services.

GI 2

Sites for Power and Telecoms Infrastructure

The need for sites for transformer sub-stations, distribution kiosks, telephone kiosks and cabinets must be considered during the planning and design stage for development projects and broadly conforms to Design Guidance outlined in SD 5.
**Justification:** In order to supply new customers with electricity it is necessary to reduce the supply voltage to that required by consumers, generally 230V for domestic customers but a higher voltage may be required by commercial and industrial customers. The electricity and telephone utility providers require areas for the construction of transformers, distribution cabinets, kiosks and masts and developers should provide suitable sites to allow the installation of the necessary equipment. For single plot developments in existing built-up areas space will often be required within the building itself.
Schedule One

VCA Population 2000

POPULATION- GRAND PORT SAVANNE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Council Area (VCA) – Grand Port</th>
<th>Population 2000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bambous Virieux</td>
<td>1,407</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bananes</td>
<td>610</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beau Vallon</td>
<td>6470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bois des Amourettes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cluny</td>
<td>1,521</td>
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<td>Grand Bel Air</td>
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<td>Grand Sable</td>
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<tr>
<td>L'Escalier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mahebourg</td>
<td>15,594</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mare Chicose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mare D'Albert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mare Tabac</td>
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<td>New Grove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nouvelle France</td>
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<td>Old Grand Port</td>
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<td>Petit Bel Air</td>
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<td>Plaine Magnien</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quatre Soeurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riviere des Creoles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riviere du Poste</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rose Belle</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Hubert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trois Boutiques</td>
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<td>Union Park</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Source: Housing & Population Census, CSO, 2000
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<th>Village Council Area (VCA) - Savanne</th>
<th>Population 2000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benares</td>
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<td>Bois Cheri</td>
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<td>Britannia</td>
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<td>Camp Diable</td>
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<td>Chamouny</td>
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<td>Chemin Grenier</td>
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<td>Souillac</td>
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<td>St Aubin</td>
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<td>Surinam</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Housing & Population Census, CSO, 2000
Schedule Two

National Heritage Fund Act
List of Items of National Heritage Sites and Monuments

GRAND PORT DISTRICT

1. Chateau Riche en Eau
2. Dutch Monument (Ferney)
3. Grand Port Battle Memorial (Pointe des Régates)
4. Ile de la Passe
5. Lighthouse (Ile aux Fouquets)
6. Maison Historique de Grand Port
7. Monument facing Railway Station (Wreck of Crysolite)
8. Monument to commemorate entry of sugar cane
9. Old Cemetery (Old Grand Port)
10. Old Disused Chimney (St. Hubert)
11. Old French Batteries (Grand Port)
12. Remains of Old French Battery (Anse Petite Sable)
13. Ruins of 1939-45 war buildings on top of the promontory, overlooking the whole of the South East Coast
14. Ruins of French Batteries (Pointe du Diable)
15. Tour Hollandais (Old Grand Port)

SAVANNE DISTRICT

16. Bain des Négresses Bridge (Souillac)
17. Baron d’Unienville Tomb (Souillac)
18. Le Batelage Building (Souillac)
19. Maison St. Aubin
20. Police Station (Souillac)
Schedule Three
Land/ Water Interface Development

(a) Boating industry facilities;
(b) Boat launching ramps;
(c) Boardwalks;
(d) Large marinas;
(e) Marinas;
(f) Public water transport facilities;
(g) Water based restaurants and entertainment facilities;
(h) Water recreational facilities;
(i) Development for the purposes of any of the following, when carried out wholly or partly in the waterway:
   (i) Dwellings of any type (including serviced apartments),
   (ii) Commercial premises,
   (iii) Tourist facilities,
   (iv) Shops and retailing,
   (v) Restaurants,
   (vi) Recreation facilities,
   (vii) Car-parking.
(j) Charter and tourism boating facilities;
(k) Commercial port facilities;
(l) Houseboats;
(m) Multiple moorings;
(n) Slipways;
(o) Wharves, jetties, pontoons;
(p) Boatsheds; and
(q) Commercial port facilities.
(r) Development/rehabilitation of existing Barachoïs, aquaculture activities
Schedule Four

Glossary of Terms