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Airport based Cradle City set to be Gauteng's green city

Cradle City, the first planned city situated around an airport in South Africa, is set to form an innovative, sustainable green-driven development situated on substantial 912ha of land surrounding Lanseria International Airport, north of Johannesburg.

The development, which will comprise a vibrant mix of residential, commercial, office, retail, hotel, resort, entertainment, warehousing and other elements, is being undertaken by Amari Land. The vision for Cradle City is to create an unparalleled mixed-use precinct which will provide the opportunity to live, work, play and travel, in an integrated environment which embraces new-urban design and green building principles.

"Cradle City will realise the ideal of a cost-effective urban plan comprising different precincts designed to become a healthy, thriving city over a 25 year period and beyond," says Amari's Preston Haskell.

Amari Land was founded in early 2007 by highly respected international property developer Preston Haskell, African mining entrepreneur Mike Nunn and MD of Amari Land, Andre van Wyk, a specialist in the planning and re-zoning of land. The Amari team consists of professionals with vast African and international experience covering the many disciplines of property development in Africa. Amari Land is also developing Luano City, a 380ha mixed use development in Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Amari Group focuses on identifying high economic growth regions in sub-Saharan Africa situated around pre-existing economic drivers such as airports, and developing in line with established global standards and applications.

Cradle City surrounds Lanseria International Airport, Gauteng's second largest international airport which is situated in a designated major economic growth node of Gauteng's north western corridor, located within the urban edge. It is located in Africa's fastest growing regional economy, generating more than 10% of Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Lanseria International Airport is an economic driver for Cradle City's current and future development and growth. Strong residential increases in the surrounding areas, the enhancement of existing roads, the convenient location of Lanseria — especially for travellers from Pretoria, the West Rand and the northern suburbs of Johannesburg - and the development of new roads, are all creating a growing demand for the services of Lanseria airport.

Currently Kulula is the only national passenger carrier flying from Lanseria, however it is expected that, at a later stage, other passenger carriers will use the Lanseria International Airport for some of their flights.

This will have a major impact on the number of departing passengers, which are expected to increase from 300,000 to almost 7 million in 2017. It is anticipated that the total scheduled flights will increase from 1,100 flights per annum to close to 4,000 flights in 10 years time. The airport will also increase the total freight from 5,000 tons to 20,000 tons by the year 2017.

"In addition to a unique location with Lanseria International Airport as the catalyst for the development, we are in an extraordinary position to build a city from inception. This provides an exciting opportunity to optimise the mix of uses, facilities and amenities," says Amari Director of Development Markus Kaps.

Ensuring the best mix of uses, Cradle City is aligned with government's Gauteng Growth and Development Strategy and enjoys the highest level of provincial and local government support.

Cradle City's full landholding has received mayoral committee recommendation for development master plan approval for a potential 7.7 million sqm bulk to be developed. This is envisaged to comprise some 3.2 million

sqm residential, 2.2 million sqm of offices, 1,14 sqm million of industrial, 700,000 sqm of retail, 208,000 sqm of tourism and leisure attraction and nearly 260ha reserved for environmental elements.

The development will comprise six phases, with the northern elements of the precinct being developed first. The first phase will be Cradle City Business Park, with the second phase being a mixed-use area of some 178ha including medium - and high-density housing, commercial and retail opportunities and public facilities.

A destination business tourism gateway will draw on the value of the Cradle of Humankind as the development proceeds northwards, with the northernmost portion comprising medium- to lower-density residential homes to link flawlessly with the low-density housing developments of Blair Athol and Monaghan Farms.

The northern precinct is termed the Green Coast as it enjoys magnificent views towards the Magaliesburg and has exceptional natural features including both the Crocodile River and the Jukskei River.

A dynamic 'city centre' will be created in the southern precinct, linked seamlessly with the key elements of the development, and will include a large, regional retail centre with offices, apartments and other elements for this vibrant urban living centre.



"Cradle City will become a complete destination, with everything required for quality, everyday living right on its doorstep in a vibrant, sustainable environment which integrates with the amenities in its surrounding areas with ease," says Sherry Seward, MD of Cradle City Sales.

A 'natural selection' approach, which can adapt with the times, has been applied to the design framework to be flexible enough to manage growth elegantly, while an availability of cost-effective bulk services is supported by infrastructure delivery through private/public partnership.

"Sustainability demands that urban development is more compact, avoiding the urban sprawl that has been prevalent in South Africa and establishing a quality living and working environment," says Kaps. "There has been a move towards intensification and an increase in mixed land-use and mixed residential densities, to make urban environments more liveable and reducing environmental impact."

This approach is supported in the Spatial Development Frameworks of the affected local authorities of Johannesburg and Mogale.

Brian Roberts, Divisional Director of financiers Nedbank Corporate Property Finance, says that Nedbank is pleased to be involved in this exciting project. "This unique development is the first of its kind in South Africa, offering occupiers the opportunity to live, work and fly from the same locality. The precinct is anchored by the top-class Lanseria International Airport and is one of the prime emerging nodes in the country, with development strongly supported by the local authorities and government. The shareholders in the development are high profile, highly qualified individuals backed by a strong professional team."

The first phase, Cradle City Business Park, will be located on a 78.9ha site and include a mix of some 300,000 sqm of light industrial, warehousing and distribution space, between 5,000 sqm and 10,000 sqm of retail space, in excess of 140,000 sqm of office and business space and hotel developments exceeding 10,000 sqm. It will also include a restored wetland area.

Situated as a gateway to the airport, the integrated yet self-sustained first phase is within walking distance to the airport terminal and serviced by a mini-transport system between the airport and the park.

The AAA grade mixed-use business park, with individual freehold zoned and serviced sites, provides a full spread of development, investment and rental options. "Cradle City Business Park offers an estimated average developed yield of approximately 10.5%. The first phase construction is expected to be complete and transfers to begin by mid-2010," notes Seward.

In addition to its location to nearby tourism venues, conservation areas, schools and accessibility through significant existing infrastructure with major new and planned road and public transport infrastructure, the architectural framework provides environmental stability and quality design criteria.

Furthermore, the developers are intent on ensuring that Cradle City's energy and utilities consumption are significantly less than existing developments. In fact, this green team is aiming to provide the infrastructure and foundation that which will secure the first level of the Green Building Council of South Africa's Green Star rating points as part of the land purchase.

Through innovative design, the developers have a vision of creating a city that uses 40% of the electricity of an existing city of the same composition and size, 50% of the potable water, 50% of the sewerage, 50% of the storm water, 60% of the solid waste and a mere 35% of the CO2 emissions from vehicles.