# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# CONCOR GIVES PORT ALFRED TO FISH RIVER ROAD VITAL UPGRADE

Extensive realignment and rebuilding of the R72 route from Port Alfred to the Fish River by Concor Infrastructure will make this busy route safer and more suited to heavier traffic.

Concor Infrastructure, previously known as Murray & Roberts Infrastructure, is part of Concor Construction which was recently acquired by a consortium led by Southern Palace Group.

According to Concor Infrastructure project manager Bennie Hook, the road has become much busier in recent years with vehicle numbers climbing to about 5,500 a day. Up to 40% of this traffic is commercial or heavy transport trucks.

The Concor Infrastructure contract awarded by the South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL) covers the 27.5 km between Port Alfred and the Fish River Bridge, and includes the addition of alternate passing lanes in each direction. The project is expected to be completed by October 2018.

Hook says the work begins in Port Alfred, and will improve the urban road through the town, and also add shoulders, kerbs, drains and even pedestrian walkways in places. The bulk of the work is taking place on the rural road with rebuilding, broadening and realigning to make it stronger, safer and longer lasting.

SANRAL required that the project be implemented in such a way as to avoid the ‘stop-and-go’ traffic management method as far as possible, due to the traffic disruption this causes as well as the associated safety hazards. The project roll-out first proceeded on the ‘left-hand side’ (facing west towards the Fish River), and will move over to the other side only when traffic can flow on the new lanes.

Concor Infrastructure site agent, Michael Stiebel says an important improvement on the new road will be better ‘line-of-sight’ for drivers.

“The existing road was constructed essentially along the lie of the land,” says Stiebel, “The realignment gives motorists a much better view of the road’s contours and bends, as well as on-coming traffic at a distance.”

Some of the vertical realignments have been up to three metres in height. The volume of crushed stone comes mainly from a new quarry at Shaw Park, which has produced about 1,5 million tonnes of crushed stone including aggregate, rock fill, drain stone and slurry dust.

Ensuring a better rideability of the road is another priority that has influenced the execution of this project, with the help of some high-tech equipment, says Hook.

“Our graders are equipped with Trimble grade control systems to help achieve these higher rideability levels,” says Hook. “We use the model that employs global positioning system (GPS) technology, and have now also employed an upgraded model that works from a robotic total station.”

The realigned new road will comprise a 300 mm thick selected sub-grade layer and a 300 mm thick crushed G4 sub-base layer, stabilised with 2,5-3% of AfriSam 32.5 Roadstab bagged cement. On top of that comes a 150 mm base layer, and a final 20 mm Cape Seal on the rural road; the section through Port Alfred will receive an asphalt wearing course after widening and strengthening.

R72 PIC 01 : The Fish River Bridge – the easterly limit of Concor’s R72-route project – will receive minor refurbishments and a precast concrete rail to replace the missing steel railings.

R72 PIC 02 : Road stabilising cement from AfriSam is used to strengthen the base layer wherever it is replaced.

R72 PIC 03 : In one of the deepest fills on the contract, two types of temporary lateral support – soil nails in excavation sequence (left) and bidim wrap support with backfill-stabilised material (right) – were installed. This allows traffic to continue flowing on the existing road while the new road is constructed.

R72 PIC 04: The roadworks include the building of a completely new roadway alongside the existing route.

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