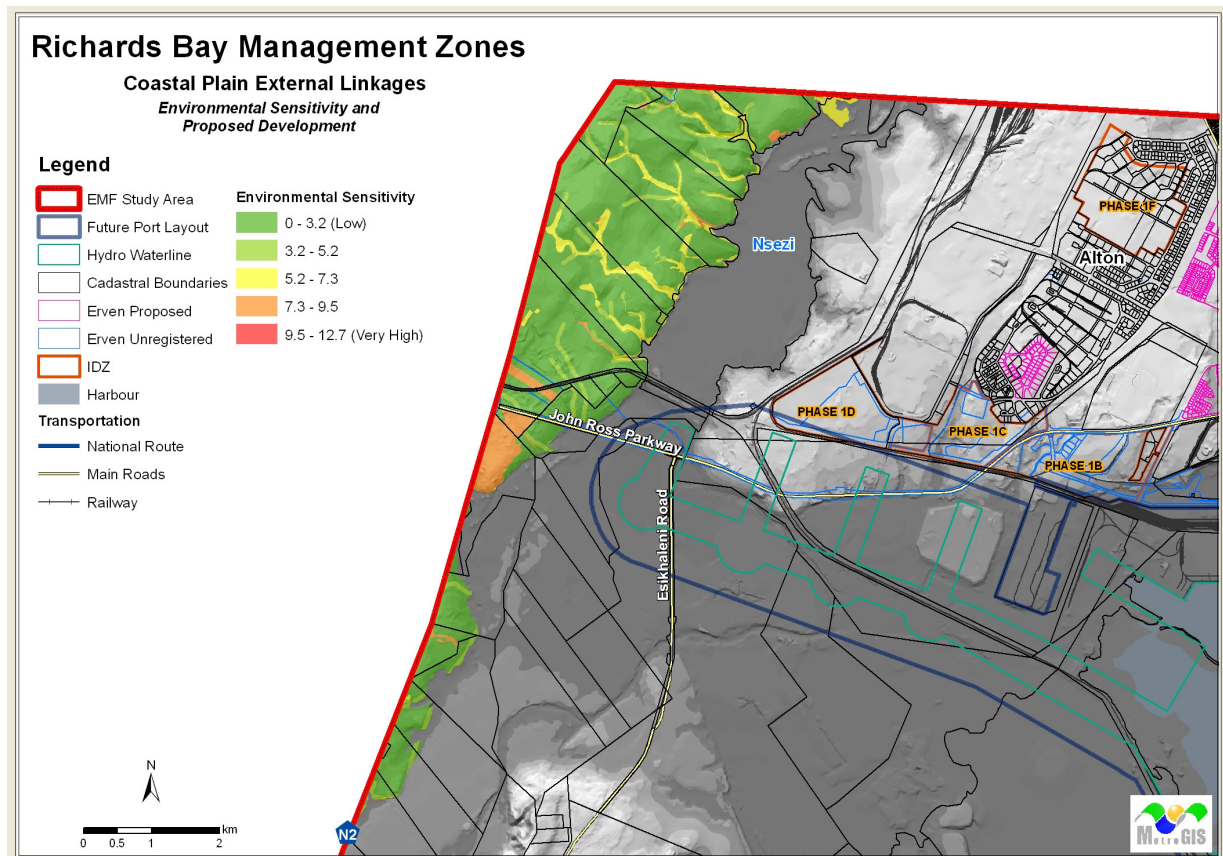


#### 4.4.8 Zone 8: Coastal Plain External Linkages Area

This zone comprises the coastal plain areas west of Lake Nsezi and the N2. **Figure 60** indicates that the zone falls primarily outside the EMF study area but it is nevertheless included here as a management zone to facilitate linkages with future planning. The areas immediately west of Lake Nsezi are currently used for primary activities such as timber production and agriculture.



**Figure 60: ZONE 8: Coastal Plain External Linkages (Environmental Sensitivity and Proposed Land Use)**

#### CONSTRAINTS IN THIS ZONE:

Forestry consumes high volumes of water. This activity, where it occurs immediately adjacent to Lake Nsezi, reduces stream flow and impacts the water volumes of Lake Nsezi which is an important environmental asset for the municipality in that it secures water for industrial and urban expansion. Alien plant invasions in this area reduce environment potential and are a threat to the area's ecological and hydrological integrity.

The City has identified development scenarios for the future of the broader municipal area and six potential expansion areas have emerged west of the N2. The characteristics of these areas are described in the *City of uMhlathuze Revision of Spatial Development Framework (2007)*. These scenarios highlight the challenges for removing blockages in the natural growth of the area which include inter alia issues of access (development rights and tenure, mineral rights) while environmental constraints include issues such as air quality and high potential agricultural land.

### **OPPORTUNITIES IN THIS ZONE:**

The areas immediately west of Lake Nsezi present opportunities for conservation due to unique environmental characteristics. It has subsequently been identified for inclusion in a conservation area that must link the Nseleni Valley, which falls outside the study area, with Lake Nsezi and ultimately the estuary. Forestry plantations are possibly the biggest existing development opportunity for this area.

The development scenarios that were identified by the municipality west of the N2 highlight various opportunities and potential options for future industrial development. These potential opportunities for industrial expansion but should be further investigated to ascertain the extent of opportunities that could potentially release the pressure that exist in the study area.

### **POTENTIAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN OPPORTUNITIES:**

Competition for water between current users of land may become a potential conflict in future. The catchment is oversubscribed and there are limited opportunities for the timber industry to receive water allocations elsewhere. This may potentially create a conflict with the conservation proposal for this area.

The general demand for land in the broader municipal area may also create conflicts between development and conservation. The City's Spatial Framework Plan makes reference to existing and anticipated future development pressures, and there is reason to believe that the long-term demands for growth may not be so easily absorbed by the broad municipal area. If the challenges for removing blockages in the natural growth of the area can't be overcome west of the N2 it may increase competition with the land earmarked for conservation west of Lake Nsezi.