

## Park Island Residential Public Open Spaces

### Management

Maintenance and improvement of Public Open Space (POS) in Park Island are performed by 3 separate but interlocking entities

- City of Cape Town Recreation and Parks - grass mowing, trimming of trees and maintenance of children's playgrounds
- The Marina da Gama Association supplies gardeners with tools on Tuesdays, typically every 3 weeks. A volunteer Park Island resident manages the gardeners on the day they are allocated to Park Island (previously Sylvia Stringer, now Cherry Giljam)
- Park Island CID (PICID). Previously, residents maintained and developed areas on their own initiative and at their own cost. With the launch of PICID, resources have been budgeted to maintain and develop the POS further, providing materials, tools and labour to the volunteers.

Details of the PICID budget are available in the PICID Business Plan on our website.

### Implementation

The roles of the Council and the MDGA will not change - they will continue to apply their resources. PICID will apply additional resources to develop the POS further for the benefit of all residents.

We are moving into the Summer maintenance season so the next few months will mostly be looking after what we have. Planting season will commence when Autumn comes around again.

We are in discussions with Fynbos LIFE, a wildlife charity and non-profit organisation, for guidance in developing our POS to support local biodiversity. [Click here](#) for the Fynbos LIFE website.

### Thibault Park

Thibault Park required some immediate intervention. An outline plan for the area was developed so that we could address 2 issues

1. Areas where the grass had worn away due to sports activities need to be rehabilitated, as these would have become larger during the summer. We have planted vygies which are freely available and indigenous to the area.
2. There are wildflowers blooming across the park. The Council is due to start mowing, so we have demarcated a non-mowing area to protect these plants while we complete the plan for the area. Sword grass was removed from certain areas so that the local vlei grass and wildflowers would not be overwhelmed.

The outline plan below will be developed further with implementation due to start in the Autumn.



### Sports and Council by-laws

The City of Cape Town by-laws prohibit ball games in parks, except on specifically designated sports fields. There are good reasons for this. The surface is easily damaged, and without groundskeepers to maintain them, the lawns soon turn to sand. Also, ball games interfere with other users' enjoyment of the POS.

The regular soccer games in Thibault Park have caused strong disagreements within our and the surrounding communities, with many people speaking at cross purposes. We need to distinguish between children and young adults. In the by-laws, the playground equipment is designated for under 14 years only. There is no intention to stop this cohort from engaging in family-based kickarounds, or any other sport, in the park.

The problem arises when 20-odd young adults participate in regular games, destroying the grass, damaging the flowerbeds, breaking fencing and denying other residents the enjoyment of the park. We believe that these games should properly be held in a sports facility.

We are sympathetic to the desire of young adults to have vigorous outdoor exercise. We have therefore engaged with a broad spectrum of people to find a suitable venue. Moving the game elsewhere within the Marina does not solve the problem. We have spoken to Councillors, local soccer clubs, NGOs and anyone who would listen. Interestingly, in our discussions, we learnt that many sports clubs do not use the grass fields in summer, due to heavy wear and tear, and limit summer activities to astroturf.

We are hopeful to find a solution and encourage any residents with suggestions to contact us. We will, however, continue to insist that the by-laws are applied.

#### Anti-social behaviour

Unfortunately, there has been a measure of anti-social behaviour. Threats have been made ("We know where you live") and people have been intimidated. Silvia Stringer, who has made a huge contribution to Park Island, resigned due to fear for her safety.

#### Conclusion

The PICID Environmental project is long-term - for example, the rehabilitation of Park Island Nature Reserve started over 20 years ago. We will be looking for keen gardeners to take ownership of small areas of POS in their area, with funding provided by PICID. There will be some flagship projects (Thibault Park, Park Island Way entrance, 2 x pedestrian bridge approaches) and many local projects over time.