



Gardens of Life Proposal: A Lot for Everyone

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Introduction

This proposal is intended to provide Khulisa Social Solutions (Khulisa), the City of Cape Town, the District Six Trust, and additional stakeholders with potential development ideas for the “Canterbury Street Lot.”

The lot is located in Cape Town’s Central Business District, just inside an area formerly known as District Six. Today, the lot remains largely undeveloped. This is due to a historical legacy that involved the forced removal of residents and the demolition of existing buildings (a residential complex and soap factory). Foundations of the houses that stood on the lot decades ago are still visible and people in the area still cherish its memory as both a vibrant neighborhood and as a symbol of oppression.

For two months, students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) worked with Khulisa, the local street community, Service Dining Rooms (SDR), Fruit & Veg City Store, those who park on the lot, and additional partners to understand the current dynamics of the area. We aimed to foster community by creating a more inclusive space and raising awareness about the street people and the issues they face.

A collaborative approach was taken to gather the necessary information this informed proposal. By consistently working alongside “street people” who live and work on the lot, a deeper understanding of their daily needs and challenges was developed. Throughout the project, the street people provided valuable insight about the area and improvements that could be made to various parts of the lot. Their involvement was vital in helping to design and implement the “Gardens of Life” mural and “People’s Garden Terrace.” These initiatives were put in place to foster a larger goal of creating an inclusive community at the Canterbury Street Lot.

Although initial steps have been taken, many other improvements could still be made in the area. These ideas are further explored in this document. In this proposal, we have divided the lot into distinct sections. Our team analyzed the current usage and function of each section. Using the input from members of the street community and those who park in the area, we suggest the following further development ideas for the lot that focus on fostering a more accepting, understanding and inclusive community.



WPI

Canterbury Street Lot: Section Map



A. Fruit & Veg Store:

1. Fruit & Veg City Store
2. Fruit & Veg Garden: the Streetscape Program
3. Fruit & Veg Parking Lot #1: Clients' Parking
4. Fruit & Veg Parking Lot #2: Employee Parking

B. Slopes:

5. Roeland St. Slope:
6. People's Garden Terrace Slope
7. Canterbury St. Slope:

C. The Street Community:

8. Parking Lot Attendants' Informal Storage:
9. Parking Lot Attendants' Residence:

D. Canterbury's Terrain:

10. Informal Street Residences and Parking Lot:
11. Kent Street

A. Fruit & Veg

Section 1



Fruit & Veg City Store

Fruits & Veg is located on section “1” of the Canterbury Street Lot. Fruit & Veg leases the space from the city.



Proposed Changes

No changes were proposed for this sections since the belong to Fruit & Veg City Store.



Section 2

Fruit & Veg Garden: the Streetscape Program



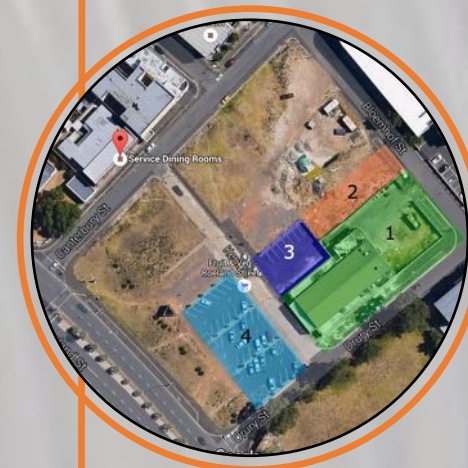
Section 2 of the lot is wholly dedicated to Khulisa Social Solution's Streetscape program. Khulisa's program offered to youth (Under 35) who live on the street, is a publicly funded work program where they get paid for gardening and attending life training exercises. The entity of area 2 is the fenced in garden Khulisa uses, the space donated by neighboring Fruit & Veg City. Here they build planter boxes to grow vegetables for sale to local markets and grocery stores, with the profits going to the people in the Streetscape program.



Proposed Changes

This section's proposed ideas are to keep working on developing the garden and the Streetscape program and use the wall colliding with Fruit & Veg as mural in order to further develop the "Gardens of Life" concept.

On the wall shared with the Fruit & Veg City store, Khulisa Social Solution intends to install a 12-meter shipping container that will be used for storage and as a collection point for 5 tons of glass for a new recycling program.





Fruit & Veg Parking Lot #1: Client's Parking

This region serves as one of Fruit & Veg's parking lots and it is adjacent to the Streetscape garden. There are currently a couple of short trees that separate this area from Section 10. There is also a wedge along the wall of Fruit & Veg where four parking lot workers sleep. The store lets them use this space and only ask that they gather their belongings in the morning, which they move to Section 8.

Proposed Changes

The "Gardens of Life" was chosen as the theme to represent the mural and memorial we created, as well as the already-existing garden used by the Streetscape program. The mural features a design created by Lenny, a member of the Streetscape program, inspired by the tree of life, as well as a poem written by Teresa Alexander, member of the street community.



Section 4

Fruit & Veg Parking Lot #2: Employee Parking

This area of the lot is the parking space offered by Fruit & Veg to its patrons. Throughout the day, this paved zone with parking lines sees many cars whose owners shop at the grocery store for varying amounts of time. The space is beautified with lines of small trees surrounded by stones at the base to protect the roots.



Proposed Changes

No changes were proposed for this sections since the belong to Fruit & Veg City Store.



B. Slopes

Section 5

Roeland Street Slope

Canterbury's northeast side slope, section "5" on the map, is used as an informal parking lot space for six or more cars. It is also serves as residence for four member of the street community. This group of people consists of a couple, a woman that travels along with them and one of our co-developers, Geraldine. From section five's residents, Geraldine is the only one that has resided on the lot from over 20 years, the rest transit on the lot in a nomadic fashion. They keep their belongings at the top of the hill on the lower left corner of the area. Regularly, law enforcement visits this area of the lot looking for drugs that the street residents may have in-between their belongings. Consequently, there are several disputes about their belongings being taken away from them, leaving them unprotected to the night environment.

Proposed Changes

To improve the Roeland street we propose to flatten out the hill in order to expand Fruit & Veg's parking lot 1 and Geraldine's parking area. Also, it is suggested to plant trees along Roeland St. to beautify and make greener the area.



People's Garden Terrace Slope

Section 6 of the lot is the proposed location for the new District Six/Street Community memorial designed by the WPI team in tandem with people on the lot. Currently the main use for area 6 is as a waiting area for the patrons of Service Dining Rooms. People sleep in the space during the day waiting for SDR to open their doors. Due to this, there is a lot of trash in this area as no one keeps it clean. Adding to this, SDR throws out their old food in the same spot every day. The land there has become very worn down and infested with pigeons due to this. There are also lots of large boulders that add to the ineffectiveness of this land. Bricks of old buildings from District Six also litter the surface.

Proposed Changes

The "People's Garden Terrace" memory place was created for the individuals of the community to celebrate the lives of those who have passed on during the forced removals of the apartheid era, as well as those whose lives were lost on the streets of Cape Town.

Built with the help of several community members, its hollow retaining wall bricks allow the street community to plant flower in honor of their loved ones. It features a plaque, explaining its purpose and history, and gabions basket benches filled with bricks and rubble from pre-apartheid houses collected from the lot.



Canterbury Street Slope

This space slopes from the unpaved parking area down to Canterbury Street. Some clients of Service Dining Rooms choose to relax on this slope while they wait for SDR to open. The slope has various dirt paths worn into the overgrown grass from continued use by people traversing the lot on foot.

Proposed Changes

For this sections the team was aid by a landscape architect that provided us with a different view on this hill's potential. Gabion Baskets would be installed in a terrace fashion incorporating a flight of stairs for people to go over the hill comfortably.

To do so, the soil spilled from the slope has to be cleared out to uncover Canterbury Street's sidewalk. Also, the soil from the hill has to be dough out to provide space for the gabion baskets to sit and retain the soil behind them.



C. The Street Community

Section 8

Parking Lot Attendants' Informal Storage



Area 8 is predominantly occupied by those living on that side of the lot; Achmat, Peter and his wife, and Parker and his wife. This is where they pack up their belongings, under a blanket to keep it out of sight, during the day so they won't be taken by CCID (City Center Improvement District) and law enforcement. During the day and at dusk they also cook here on a makeshift grill made of rocks and a metal grate. The proximity to the garden also allows them to use the fence to dry clothes and blankets after washing them.

Proposed Changes

To improve section 8 the team proposes to create storage containers for the street community to store their possessions during day improving the lot's physical appearance.

Some suggestions are to utilize space from the Service Dining Rooms as storage or developing hanging storage to be hung on the Fruit & Veg garden's fence.



Parking Lot Attendant's Residence:

This is where the other three parking lot workers, Achmat, Peter and Lilly, sleep. They keep all their belongings in a small area along the wall of the Downtown Lodge, adjacent to Bloemhof Street. They currently have a mattress placed on the floor and a few bags around it. During the day, Lilly usually stays there with Parker's wife, (blank name), and other homeless people stop by to talk to them. One of the biggest challenges they face in this region is the safety for their belongings, as they do not have a place to keep their things and often have problems with the law enforcement.

Proposed Changes

To improve this section, along with the previous one, storage for their belongings should be provided. Also, the team suggests to motivate the residents to overcome their current situation enabling them to relocate to a nearby shelter.



D. Canterbury's Terrain

Section 10

Informal Street Residences and Parking Lot:



This is one of the unofficial parking areas in the lot. It is an unpaved region that does not contain any parking lines, and where 22 cars can be parked at once. This space is unofficially taken care of by Geraldine, who works as a parking attendant and watches over the cars that park there throughout the day to ensure its safety. The people who park there usually work in the area and donate either food or a few Rand coins to her in return. Because she has been in the area for many years, most parkers know whom she is and are inclined to help her. However, many complain about the current state of the area and wish improvements were done to it.

Proposed Changes

Re-paving the Canterbury street lot's surface will invite more people to park their cars on the lot as well as improving its physical appearance over all. Also, adding parking spaces lines will provide structure to the lot facilitating the exit and entrance of cars.



Kent Street

Kent Street cuts the Canterbury Street Lot into two sections. This division is seen in the claims laid by the parking attendants. This cobblestone throughway serves as the main access road to Fruit & Veg along with Drury Street. Some choose to park along the side of this road, narrowing traffic to one car.

Proposed Changes

For this sections, the team proposes re-paving or reconstruct the street citing the historical importance of cobblestones in order to facilitate transit on the lot.

