

City dwellers encouraged to interact more with their city

With its natural beauty Cape Town is home to several popular and active public spaces. Allowing city dwellers to interact with their city; public spaces are the living rooms, gardens and corridors of urban areas.

"In the City Bowl area, the Company Gardens remains a favourite all week long and is busy long before and after city workers have made their way home. The Fan Walk (Waterkant Street to St Andrew's Square and all the way to Cape Town Stadium) is also very busy during sporting and cultural events. The city's squares, such as Greenmarket Square and Grand Parade, as well as Thibault Square, are popular destinations for shopping, eating or merely watching the world go by, and these are to name but a few," said Cape Town Partnership CEO, Bulelwa Makalima-Ngewana.

"The fact that these public spaces are utilised so well speaks to the fact that residents and visitors alike are interacting with the city. At the Cape Town Partnership, we believe that public spaces allow for connections to occur, often between diverse users of the space," said Makalima-Ngewana.



While the above-mentioned public spaces are very popular, Makalima-Ngewana says that city dwellers still need encouragement to explore the city and those spaces that aren't as utilised and, in order to do this, the city needs to conceptualise public spaces with the end-user in mind and by involving all potential users in the planning processes of new public spaces.

Multiple uses

"For existing public spaces that are perhaps not as well utilised as the ones mentioned above, it may be a good idea to introduce multiple uses for the space. For instance, consider what would happen if we combined sports and eating, cultural activities and meeting places in one public space. There'd be a variety of users and the space would be active for longer periods."

However, on a positive note, residents don't have to go out and discover these spaces alone, with the help of initiatives such as Open Streets and City Walk Saturdays, you can come out and play in the city with other city dwellers on a monthly basis.



"What Open Streets and City Walk Saturdays have in common is that these activities are citizen activated. It is incumbent upon citizens to reclaim public space for themselves. What is exciting about the past year is how many citizens are becoming active and having a say in the monuments and artwork that define these public spaces," said Makalima-Ngewana.

Such initiatives allow residents the opportunity to interact with the city in a different way, Makalima-Ngewana encourages them to become more involved in the provision and transformation of these spaces especially those areas that have inadequate public spaces. For those who are interested in finding out more, you can go to openstreets.co.za or www.capetownpartnership.co.za

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