



**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY PARKS POLICY WITHIN A  
METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

**BY**

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR**

**THE DEGREE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**IN THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

**AT THE CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**DISTRICT SIX CAMPUS**

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**04 AUGUST 2023**

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## ABSTRACT

Community Parks are intended as a pivotal platform that serves a broad spectrum of communities through providing opportunities for their members to enjoy recreation. In 2015 the selected municipality introduced a Community Parks Development Policy. The desired outcomes of the policy are twofold. Firstly, to develop parks that satisfactorily address the needs of communities. Secondly, an equally important aim is to ensure the long-term sustainability of park developments, particularly in situations in which capital and operating resources are limited. This study was undertaken to investigate if the Community Parks Development Policy is being implemented efficiently and, thus, effectively serves its intended purposes. The investigation was essentially conducted to improve service delivery that will create social cohesion within communities, create and maintain healthy communities and, ultimately, be instrumental in marginalising antisocial behaviour and crime. The study took the form of structured interviews, the object of which was to formulate recommendations as to how the Community Parks Development Policy can best be implemented to maximise its potential capacity. The research population in this study included management from the different levels within the Directorate Community Service and Health of the selected municipality. The research participants also included are the chairpersons of the Ratepayers Associations within the designated sub-district. The study focused on 48 community parks in ward 25 and 37 community parks in ward 28. The findings of this study revealed that communities have not been engaged in the design of community parks, and the municipality's approach does not suit the unique needs of the community. It is recommended that the municipality put measures in place to improve the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy, introduce strategies to improve community participation in policy implementation on parks and cooperate with the community to address community challenges in the maintenance of community parks.

**Keywords:** Community Parks, Recreation, Municipality, Park Maintenance, Community Participation, Policy.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### **I wish to thank:**

- My Supervisor, Dr Stanford Cronjé, for his fountain of patience, motivational zeal and relentless energy. I could not have asked for a better supervisor.
- My mother, Ouida Heynes, for always encouraging and motivating me to further my studies and improve myself, my late father, Robert Heynes, for believing in me, my sisters Glynis Heynes, Colleen Heynes, Fiona Barnes, brother-in-law Patrick Barnes and nieces for their support and all the sacrifices made.
- My partner mother of our sons Simone Damonze and our sons Gabriel and Kai for constantly motivating me, the endless support and all the sacrifices made.
- The Titus and Stringer family, Shaun, Colleen, Lisa, Luc, Melissa and Daren, for always showing interest and keeping me on the right path.
- All participants who played a part in the study, for taking time to respond to the survey and making this research process a success.

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to thank my Heavenly Father for His grace in making this opportunity possible, preparing the way and granting me the understanding to complete this dissertation – without Him, this would not have been possible.

## Contents

Chapter One: Background to the Study .....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background.....	2
1.3 Problem statement.....	5
1.4 Research questions.....	6
1.5 Research Objectives.....	6
1.6 Preliminary Literature review .....	6
1.7 Research Methodology .....	8
1.7.1. Research approach .....	8
1.7.2. Sampling method .....	9
1.7.3. Data collection .....	9
1.7.4. Data analysis .....	9
1.8 Demarcation of the study .....	9
1.9 Ethical considerations .....	10
1.9 Significance of the study.....	10
1.10 Layout of the study .....	10
1.11 Definition of terms .....	11
1.12 Summary .....	12
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	13
2.1 Introduction.....	13
2.2 Legislative Framework .....	14
2.2.1 The Constitution of South Africa, 1996.....	14
2.2.2 Integrated Development Plan (IDP).....	14
2.2.3 Organisational Development and Transformation Plan.....	16
2.2.4 Parks Development Policy (PDP).....	17
2.3 Role of parks .....	19
2. 4 Challenges for park usage .....	21

2.5 Community Participation in utilisation of Community Parks.....	22
2.6 Summary .....	27
Chapter Three: Research Methodology .....	28
3.1 Introduction.....	28
3.2 Research Design.....	28
3.3 Research Approach: Quantitative Research.....	28
3.3.1 Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Research .....	29
3.4 Research Approach: Qualitative Research.....	29
3.4.1 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research .....	30
3.5 Data collection .....	31
3.6 Data .....	31
3.6.1 Primary data .....	31
3.6.2 Secondary data .....	32
3.7 Data collection method .....	32
3.7.1 Interviews.....	32
3.7.2 Semi – structured interviews.....	33
3.7.3 Interview Guide .....	34
3.7.4 Research Population.....	36
3.8 Sampling .....	36
3.8.1 Probability sampling .....	36
3.8.2 Non-probability sampling .....	36
3.8. 2 Purposive sampling defined.....	37
3.8.3 Data analysis .....	38
3.9 Summary .....	39
Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Findings .....	40
4.1 Introduction.....	40
4.2 Demographics of research participants .....	40
4.3 Emerging Themes .....	43
4.3.1 Theme 1 : Implementation of the policy of parks .....	43

4.3.2 Theme 2 – The process of community participation.....	44
4.3.3 Theme 3: Challenges in Park Maintenance.....	45
4.3.4 Community utilisation of parks.....	46
4.3.5 Improvement of Community Parks.....	48
4.4 Findings.....	49
4.5 Discussion.....	49
4.5.1 The implementation of the policy for parks within the municipality is not effective .....	50
4.5.2 The process of getting the community to participate in managing parks leaves much to be desired. .....	50
4.5.3 Parks are not adequately maintained.....	51
4.5.4 Parks are not being utilised optimally by the community at large. ....	51
4.5.5 Community Parks require extensive improvement .....	51
4.6 Summary .....	52
Chapter Five: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion.....	53
5.1 Introduction.....	53
5.2 Realisation of the research objectives of the study .....	53
5.3 Summary of the Chapters.....	53
5.3.1 Chapter 1 .....	53
5.3.2 Chapter 2.....	54
5.3.3 Chapter 3.....	54
5.3.4 Chapter 4.....	54
5.4 Recommendations.....	55
5.4.1 The municipality should put measures in place to improve the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy.....	55
5.4.2. The municipality should introduce strategies to improve community participation in policy implementation on parks.....	55
5.4.3. The municipality should cooperate with the community to address community challenges in the maintenance of public parks. ....	56



5.4.4. The municipality should engage with the community with a view to improving the utilisation of parks by the community.....	56
5.5. Recommendation for future research.....	56
5.5 Conclusion .....	57
References.....	58
Annexure 1.....	63
Annexure 2.....	64

## **Chapter One: Background to the Study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Recreation is an essential part of life because it contributes to individual and community wellness. A community park provides an environment where family and friends can enjoy themselves without any immediate expenses. It can be utilised as a multi-functional facility other than a single use such as a playground. The Parks Development Policy 37181 of 2015 (City of Cape Town, 2015), as indicated in the glossary above, defines a Community Park as “land zoned ‘public open space’ of a smaller scale which serves the informal recreational needs of the immediate local community or neighbourhoods”. The policy prescribes that the selected municipality is required to involve communities by engaging with them around the design of community parks. A park should be designed in a manner that allows communities to enjoy the facilities it offers. A lack of engagement with communities and the minimal foot traffic through parks, however, have resulted in these spaces becoming breeding grounds for antisocial and criminal behaviour.

Community parks have the potential to provide more than basic play park equipment. Francis (2002:3) advises that “parks are one of the quickest and most effective ways to build a sense of community and improve quality of life”. A community park can easily be used as a social platform and has the potential to create cohesion that will ultimately result in uniting and strengthening communities. In order for this practice to happen, the community park has to be aesthetically designed or multi-functional to accommodate all patrons, including disabled persons. The Recreation and Parks Department within the selected municipality has a sound blueprint to ensure community parks become sites of social activity. This blueprint takes the form of legislative, theoretical and strategic frameworks. Sadly, these frameworks have not transposed into reality yet. Adam Silver shares insights in New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (2015:1) on an ideal community park. According to Silver, neighbours should feel welcome, proud of and engaged in their respective community parks due to the space being well cared for, and access to such places should not only be determined or restricted by proximity. Currently, community parks in the selected municipality essentially do not speak to the needs of the community. Parks do not offer services necessary for them to be identified as public spaces that are enjoyed by the majority of the community. In many cases the parks have become single use facilities for children and, even then, are usually neglected.

## **1.2 Background**

The Recreation and Parks Department effectively came into being in early 2017. It is a product of an amalgamation of two city departments previously known as City Parks, and Sport, Recreation and Amenities. The amalgamation was a product of the city's Organisational Development and Transformation Plan (ODTP), that was aimed at identifying and optimising synergies and reducing the overlapping of functions and services across city departments. It is currently a department within the Community Services and Health Directorate which has undergone three name changes since 2016. The Directorate was initially known as Community Services, then as Social Services and is now branded Community Services and Health. Simply put, the ultimate purpose of the amalgamation and ODTP in its entirety was to streamline the optimal provision of community services.

The implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy is responsible for realising this objective. The overall objective of this policy is the development of parks in a sustainable manner that sufficiently meets the needs of communities. This goal applies especially in instances in which there are constraints on operating and capital resources. The selected municipality acknowledges that recreational facilities and parks have the potential to make a pivotal contribution towards the lives of residents and visitors. The municipality therefore appreciates the need to commit to fulfilling its obligation to provide parks and facilities that are of a high standard, within reachable proximity and safe, stimulating and appealing to users, especially children, and which address and satisfy the varying needs of communities and special stakeholders, such as people with disabilities. In addition, parks have the potential to contribute towards the achievement of other outcomes such as community pride and custodianship, as well as improved psychological well-being. These outcomes are possible because parks can provide opportunities for informal sport and recreation. They, thus, can serve as spaces to aid in the development of healthy individuals and, ultimately, healthy communities. The overarching aim of the Community Parks Development Policy, that is revealed in the relevant provisions of the Policy discussed above, is to impose obligations on the municipality regarding the provisioning of parks. The policy itself, thus, illustrates the importance of creating and maintaining community parks within the metropolitan municipality for both residents and visitors.

The municipality's duties in terms of the Community Parks Development Policy are further reinforced by the reciprocal duty the municipality owes towards both ratepayers and taxpayers. In exchange for the payment of rates and taxes, the municipality is obliged to deliver services. Such service delivery includes citizens' right to well designed and maintained parks. The

outdoor environment is enjoyed for many reasons and is potentially an important social platform in which families and friends can spend quality time, become fit and/or relax. The Recreation and Parks Department within the selected municipality is responsible for catering to and satisfying the needs of residents and visitors in this regard. The service mandate of the department is the delivery of recreational services and programmes, as well as amenities that encourage municipal residents to be more active and to increase their utilisation of such amenities accordingly. The emphasis the department places on both recreation and the provision of facilities that enable people to become both fit as well as programmes that encourage them to actively participate in community development may pose a challenge. This contest is due to the difference between providing world class facilities and serving communities with programmes that require a tailor-made approach.

The department is responsible for a diverse service offering that includes the provision of the following facilities, amenities and infrastructure of which the community parks within wards 25 and 28 are studied. The majority of the areas within wards 25 and 28 are low-income households with minimal middle-income households.

- 177 community centres (i.e., halls, conference rooms and minor halls),
- 12 multi-purpose centres,
- 3 562 community parks and gardens, including SMART parks (community-led design parks with unique design features and construction materials).
- 13 district parks,
- 35 swimming pools,
- 159 formal sport fields and complexes,
- 10 biodiversity sites,
- 40 cemeteries,
- 1 crematorium,
- 13 resorts (facilities providing overnight holiday accommodation),
- 72 nodal points along the coast (swimming beaches, pavilions, boardwalks, etc.).
- 8 tidal pools,
- 6 spray parks, together with programmes, projects and special events relating to:
  - recreation programmes for all age groups,

- active living programmes,
- sectoral and targeted recreation programmes, for example youth, senior citizens and early childhood programmes, etc.,
- drowning prevention and summer readiness programmes,
- holiday programmes and seasonal camps,
- transversal development programmes,
- greening programmes – urban forests, horticultural layouts, community gardening, etc.,
- special events and projects for memorial and celebratory days, e.g. Arbour Month, Women’s Day, World Environment Day, etc. and
- coastal management programmes.

The municipality is also responsible for support and management programmes that include:

- infrastructure maintenance programmes,
- water demand management programmes,
- expanded public works and job creation programmes and
- supporting corporate initiatives relating to special projects and /or new approaches to service delivery e.g., project plant maintenance, human resources programmes and strategies, resilience programmes, etc.

The emphasis on recreational amenities in the Integrated Development Plan’s (IDP) strategic narrative illustrates the municipality’s intent to prioritise recreation within communities. The strategic narrative of the IDP states that community events, coupled with public recreational facilities and lively communal spaces, enable or stimulate the enhancement of diversity within the city. It, therefore, provides an opportunity for diversity to be embraced and for the establishment and deepening of social ties. The metropolitan municipality recognises its huge and pivotal role within communities regarding recreation that ultimately contributes towards the achievement of social cohesion.

The White Paper on Sport and Recreation for the Republic of South Africa tasks local authorities with (a) the expansion of policy at bottom tier or municipal level; (b) the execution and observation of recreation policies; and (c) the establishment, improvement, upkeep and control of infrastructure for recreation within local government (Republic of South Africa, 2012:54).

In its pursuit of mapping Cape Town as a premier recreation destination, the Recreation and Parks Department strives to provide world-class facilities and programmes. The department

furthermore recognises its potential role in encouraging and aiding Capetonians to lead a healthy lifestyle by ensuring that facilities are well managed and maintained.

A community park is one of the spaces that family and friends can enjoy at minimal cost, as noted above. In fact, such opportunities should be provided for the residents and visitors of the metropolitan municipality. As stated previously, a community park is potentially a social platform for people to spend quality time, relax and get fit. The ultimate purpose of a community park is the provision of service delivery by satisfying the needs of residents and visitors. The Recreation and Parks Department's focus is on developing, enhancing and conserving these open spaces, for the well-being and benefit of both present and future generations.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

There appears to be strong evidence that the manner in which the Community Parks Development Policy is being implemented currently, starkly contradicts the objective (as set out in the relevant frameworks) of community parks being enjoyed by the majority of the community. The legislative, theoretical and strategic frameworks are sound, but the implementation and practicality of the policy is not transposed effectively, resulting in the policy being unsuccessful. As stated above, whilst the community park is intended to be a platform for recreation and a tool to create social cohesion, it currently creates a space for antisocial and criminal behaviour and activity. A previous study conducted within the selected municipality (Willemse, 2015) comprising three open-ended questions focused on the creation of ideal community parks. These questions were aimed at investigating the type of facilities to be developed within community parks, what an ideal community park consists of and general commentary or recommendations that could aid the local government in growing community park usage. The improvement of play equipment was seen as a solution by 39% of the respondents, whilst 16% suggested that fixtures (e.g., tables, benches) should be improved. A lack of safety and security was cited by 27% of the respondents as a reason for decreased park usage, that they advised could be addressed by providing security guards and cameras. These findings indicate that the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy needs improvement. Achieving the intended purpose of community parks, however, is challenging because, as previously stated, the legislative, theoretical and strategic frameworks are not soundly realised, thereby rendering their implementation unsuccessful.

## **1.4 Research questions**

The research problem provides the basis for the research questions that follow:

- What is the legislative framework for parks within the selected municipality?
- What is role of parks within cities?
- What are the challenges of running public parks efficiently?
- What are the guidelines for the efficient running of public parks, and
- What are the opinions of stakeholders within the municipality and selected Ratepayers Associations within its jurisdiction?

In light of the above research questions, the following research objectives are stated below.

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

The research project attempts to:

- Describe the legislative framework for parks within the municipality,
- Explain the role of parks within cities;
- Describe the challenges of running public parks efficiently;
- Describe the guidelines for efficient running of public parks, and
- Conduct an empirical study amongst managers responsible for parks within the municipality and selected Ratepayers Associations within its jurisdiction.

## **1.6 Preliminary Literature review**

The relevant municipality administers its facilities in public parks in terms of its Parks Development Policy 37181 of 2015. The policy is administered by the Recreation and Parks Department. This department is responsible for giving effect to the Community Parks Development Policy by focusing on the following strategic objectives of the IDP:

- **The Caring City:** The City of Cape Town (CoCT) underpins the strategic pillar of being a caring city in aiding those in need by striving to provide access to community services. As part of this strategic objective the IDP compels the city to investigate the potential of collaborating with civil society and corporate organisations in developing and maintaining parks.
- **The Inclusive City:** This situation is to be achieved via the creation of an environment in which there is a sense of belonging. Through ensuring that everyone has an active interest in the community, the inclusive city is realised. One of the

ingredients to building communities that are more integrated is through the platform of providing community facilities and parks. The provisioning/delivery of community facilities and parks serves as ingredient for building more integrated communities. The CoCT will seek to collaborate in multifunctional ways with internal and external partners in the planning, implementation and management of new community facilities in compliance with the IDP. This collaboration will result in maximum community pride, ownership and use whilst duly minimising capital development and operational costs. The IDP further compels the Recreation and Parks Department to provide parks that are “custom-made” for the surrounding communities which are safe, of high quality and, where possible, integrated with other community facilities.

The desired outcomes of the Community Parks Development Policy (PDP) are focused on the sustainable development of parks that adequately meet the needs of communities, especially in instances where operating and capital resources are constrained.

The selected municipality is cognisant of the significant function that recreational facilities and parks can serve in the lives of both residents and visitors. The municipality, therefore, commits to making parks available that are (a) of an excellent standard; (b) accessible and safe; (c) aesthetically pleasing and interesting to users, particularly children; and that (d) satisfy the diverse needs of communities and specialised stakeholders, for example the physically impaired.

Levitz (2014:10) alludes to the aforementioned by stating that, “...the role of parks in cities and urban metropolitan areas has become much greater as the scope and impact of parks increasingly influences the quality of life, economic development, health, and many other aspects of urban life”.

Effective and efficient community parks can be instrumental in creating healthier communities, not just physically but socially and mentally as well. Community parks, however, as mentioned earlier, can be a breeding ground for crime and antisocial behaviour. Mavuso (2016:7) insightfully suggests that criminal and illegal activities, such as mugging, drug-dealing and rape, take place in parks are a result of a lack of social control that ultimately stems from the lack of social cohesion amongst residents. What Mavuso (2016:7) has identified can be



combated by altering the design and management of public parks to accord with the value of public parks coupled with the preferences and needs of its users.

Community parks also create challenges. For instance, Groff and Maccord (2011:16) advise that because community parks are publicly owned there is no limitation as to who can make use of them. Community parks are also minimally supervised and, therefore, are vulnerable to potentially becoming a living space for the homeless, a trading ground for drug use, as well as a platform for other criminal and antisocial behaviour (Groff & Maccord, 2011:2). A successful community park is one that caters for the needs of the majority of the community. The needs of one community might, however, not be the same as those of another. It, therefore, is imperative that communities are consulted and made part of the process of designing or redesigning community parks. Willemse (2010:109) qualifies the aforementioned statement by asserting that "...community participation is crucial to create successful park usage". Willemse, therefore, recognises that community participation is an integral component in achieving successful park usage.

Community participation, according to Willemse (2010:109), can take the form of the involvement of community members in the planning and designing of parks. Such participation can be attained by obtaining the input of volunteers who clean these parks on a regular basis. Willemse (2010:109) also speaks of the achievement of community participation through "community management of park environments". She lists, for instance, the possibility of forming both "volunteer neighbourhood watches" and "neighbourhood park-management teams" to realise this collaboration.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

The following issues are addressed under this section.

### **1.7.1. Research approach**

The qualitative research approach was utilised in this research study. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:188) and Bryman, Bell and Hirschsohn (2021:58) state that qualitative research methods aim to determine the origin of the phenomenon under investigation and stress the values that it underpins, and an incisive perspective on the relationship between theory and research, according to which the former is produced via the latter. Since the aim of this study is to make recommendations for improving service delivery in relation to community parks, the qualitative approach was the most appropriate method for this investigation.

### **1.7.2. Sampling method**

Purposive and quota sampling was employed in this research study. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:78), supported by Bryman, Bell and Hirschsohn (2021:224) purposive sampling refers to the process through which the sample's members are picked with the "purpose" of reflecting a place or type in respect to a key criterion, and to strategically select examples and/or people who are pertinent to the study questions. Purposive sampling has two primary goals: (1) all the important constituencies relevant to the subject matter are represented; (2) diversity is incorporated within each of the essential criteria so that the influence of the trait in question can be investigated. Quota sampling selects from the population, thus, the sample group is representative of specific characteristics (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:372).

The research population in this study includes managers from the different levels within the Directorate Community Services and Health of the relevant municipality, as well as chairpersons of Ratepayers Associations within the designated sub-district, selected on the basis of close proximity. The sample comprised the following officials from the relevant municipality representing all levels of management are as follows:

- 1 Area Manager
- 1 Area Head
- 1 Sub Council Manager
- 2 Ward Councillors
- 2 Superintendents
- 12 Representatives of Ratepayers Associations

### **1.7.3. Data collection**

The researcher employed an interview schedule to collect information from participants during structured individual interviews. These interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

### **1.7.4. Data analysis**

The recorded interviews were transcribed by a professionally registered organisation and the data analysed objectively by means of content analysis. The main themes arising from this process were identified and highlighted.

## **1.8 Demarcation of the study**

The research was confined to the Directorate of Community Services and Health of the relevant municipality in Wards 25 and 28.

## **1.9 Ethical considerations**

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:181) and Bryman, Bell and Hirschsohn (2021:171) observed the significance of ethical behaviour when conducting research (as holds true to any other sphere of human activity), and that when researchers promote their work as something other than what it is, deceit takes place. Ethical concerns, including issues of integrity and plagiarism, arise when results are reported. However, further ethical considerations are implicated when researching human subjects. The principles underlying research ethics are universal and generally relate to matters of integrity and the respect of participants' rights (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). An application was lodged with the metropolitan municipality seeking permission to undertake this research project. Ethical principles were unequivocally employed throughout this research study that takes the form of a master's dissertation which requires that an article be produced for publication. The identity of the municipality will not be exposed in the article.

The researcher requested the relevant municipality to inform the participants that they had been selected for interviews and to request them to cooperate with the researcher in the project. The participants' anonymity was guaranteed in that their details were not nor will be divulged at any time. Letters were sent to the chairpersons of the Ratepayers Associations identified to participate in the study asking them to make a member available to be interviewed by the researcher. It was emphasised to the potential participants that their participation in the research project is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the research project at any point should they so wish, that their identity would be protected and that they would receive continuous feedback regarding findings of the research project. Participants were requested to sign a consent form as an indication of their voluntary participation in the research project. The researcher complied fully with all ethical considerations while conducting the research project.

## **1.9 Significance of the study**

The study could generate information that the management of the relevant municipality could use to facilitate changes to the current and future utilisation of public parks. The key outcomes would include creating and strengthening social cohesion and potentially decreasing, if not eliminating, criminal and antisocial behaviour.

## **1.10 Layout of the study**

### **Chapter One: Background to the Study**

This chapter states the research problem and provides an overview of how the research was conducted.

## **Chapter Two: Literature review**

The theoretical framework is discussed in this chapter.

## **Chapter Three: Research methodology**

This chapter explains the research methodology employed in the study.

## **Chapter Four: Data analysis**

The analysis of the research data are discussed in this chapter.

## **Chapter Five: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion**

This chapter concludes the study and forwards recommendations and conclusions.

### **1.11 Definition of terms**

Community	People living together within a specific geographical area, or a group of people enjoying and/or practicing the same rituals and/or customs.
Community park	As defined by the Parks Development Policy 37181 of 2015 (City of Cape Town, 2015), a community park “means land zoned ‘public open space’ of a smaller scale which serves the informal recreational needs of the immediate local community or neighbourhood.”
Legislation	Laws, bylaws and policies.
Municipality	A geographic area determined in terms of the Local Government. “The Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998 (Act 27 of 1998) [denotes] a geographical area concluded as a municipal area, determined by Local Government” (City of Cape Town, 2015).
ODTP	Organisational Development and Transformation Plan
Parks management plan	A plan for a single or a number of similar parks that is focused on achieving the desired level of management and maintenance, while planning for the best use of resources throughout the asset lifecycle and replacement schedule. It is “directed at the allocation of resources to achieve the desired levels of maintenance and management”. The Parks Development Policy 37181 of 2015 comprises the activities of the planning, directing and controlling of resources in terms of community facilities and parks.

Recreation	Recreation refers to the social activities that residents and visitors engage in during their free time. The outcome of this participation outweighs the actual activity by, ultimately,
Recreational facilities	A specific area that caters for and serves the recreational and social needs of residents and visitors.

### **1.12 Summary**

The problem that this research study investigated was the incorrect implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy for parks and recreation within the relevant metropolitan municipality. The research posed questions regarding the implementation of the above policy and how it can be improved. The research project proposed Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion following a qualitative structure based on interviews conducted with senior managers from the Community Services and Health Directorate and the chairpersons of the Ratepayers Associations within the selected subdistrict of the municipality. It was perceived that the research would generate information that the management of the municipality could use with a view to addressing problems relating to the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy.

Community parks in their totality can ultimately positively influence the wellness of communities and visitors. Social, psychological and physical wellness represents one of the positive aspects of recreation. In proactively strengthening and unifying communities well managed community parks can potentially reduce and/or eliminate criminal and antisocial behaviour. The needs of communities differ, hence the design of community parks cannot follow a unified approach, but has to cater for the needs of different communities. Each park must be designed firstly to attract residents, and then to entice them to make the park a part of their life. In this aspect community parks can positively influence community pride, strengthen communities and in so doing unite communities.

The next chapter presents the literature review.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter defined the research problem as being concern regarding the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy relating to parks and recreation. Despite a significant amount of scholarly works concerning urban parks, little literature exists regarding community parks. The lack of academic literature on this topic has been recognized by Denoon-Stevens and Ramaila (2018). The limited literature on parks should not devalue the community park as a potential tool for creating community cohesion and healthier individuals and communities. Ultimately, it should not cause doubt in government's view regarding attempts to use parks directly and indirectly to eliminate criminal and antisocial behaviour. Community Parks can satisfy, strengthen and uplift communities or, in contrast, fragment or destroy communities. In retrospect, the lack of relevant extant literature presents an opportunity for this subject matter to be explored and should not dissuade researchers from unravelling its intricacies. The literature review could present both potential benefits and obstacles associated with community parks.

The ever-challenging socio-economic conditions should not restrict communities from enjoying recreation, especially communities which do not have the means to pay for enjoying leisure activities. The local government is ultimately responsible for the delivery of services to its communities. The municipality in this regard is mandated to make recreational opportunities available through its available resources. This chapter discusses the legislative framework relating to parks and recreation, covering the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereinafter referred to as the Constitution), Integrated Development Plan (IDP), as well as the Parks Development Policy (RSA 1996; City of Cape Town, 2015, 2017). Furthermore, the discussion explains the Organisational Development and Transformation Plan (ODTP) as the vehicle that resulted in the formation of the Recreation and Parks Department. Within the selected municipality this department is responsible for administering the above mentioned Parks Development Policy. In common with all other legal procedures, the implementation of this policy presents challenges as well as opportunities, both of which will be addressed in the following sections.

## **2.2 Legislative Framework**

### **2.2.1 The Constitution of South Africa, 1996.**

The Constitution is essentially the foundation of any service delivered by any sphere of government and prescribes the manner in which such services must be executed. Schedule 5, part B of the South African Constitution confers authority on municipalities to enact legislation concerning municipal parks and recreation. Section 156(1)(a) of the Constitution also vests executive authority in municipalities to administer municipal parks and recreation. Section 10 of the Constitution provides that everyone has the right to human dignity. Section 152(1) of the Constitution sets out the objectives of local government. These goals include “to promote a safe and healthy environment” (RSA,1996). The constitutional obligation placed on the municipality to achieve the promotion of a safe and healthy environment is prescribed in section 152(1)(d) of the Constitution. In relation to this legislative framework the Recreation and Parks Department recognises its obligation to affirm community members’ dignity and to help them realise their right to health in one respect through the provision of public parks. This reference to healthy communities extends beyond physical health. It also encompasses social and mental health that is equally important in creating and maintaining healthy communities. In addition to the constitutional mandate placed on municipalities, the White Paper on Sport and Recreation (Republic of South Africa, 2012:54) further tasks local authorities to expand recreational policies and to implement and monitor such policies at a local level. The goal of this White Paper is to clearly express the Republic of South Africa's government policy on sport and recreation. This legislation also stipulates the impact it hopes to achieve by investing in specific outcomes and strategic goals. Furthermore, it illustrates the government’s desired performance and results in relation to its vision, policy directives and strategic objectives in its provision of sport and recreation. In essence, the White Paper on Sport and Recreation provides a framework/working document for government policy. In terms of this White Paper, local authorities must build, upgrade, maintain and manage the infrastructure for recreation in municipalities, metros and districts. The metropolitan municipality, thus, has the competency to create policies, to legislate on municipal parks and recreation and to ensure that such legislation is implemented accordingly.

### **2.2.2 Integrated Development Plan (IDP)**

The IDP is a product of the Provincial Development Plan which, in turn, is borne out of the National Development Plan. Executive mayors, in alignment with the Local Government:

Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, must make recommendations to city councils regarding the strategies, programmes and services, often developed from larger policy frameworks created by provincial and national government, to address priority needs of communities through the Integrated Development Plan (Republic of South Africa, 1998). Section 55 of Act 32 of 2000, namely the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, further emphasises the pivotal role of the executive mayor in the execution of the IDP (Republic of South Africa, 2000). This Act states that the municipal manager is responsible and accountable for establishing and developing sound, performance-driven administration that facilitates the outcomes aligned with the municipality's IDP (Republic of South Africa, 2012:54).

The IDP is a five-year plan which strives to coordinate the efforts of local and other levels of government in a well-coordinated plan to improve the quality of life for all residents of a community. The plan seeks to address the economic and social development for the entire municipality, thus determining how the municipality conducts its business. In its endeavour to fulfil these obligations, the municipality, therefore, should align all of its planning, budgets, expenditure and activities accordingly. In terms of Section 56 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the executive mayor is responsible and accountable for coordinating the annual revision of the IDP (Republic of South Africa, 2000). This practice requires the executive mayor to develop the annual budget and determine how the IDP will be included or changed for budgetary purposes. The IDP is a statement of intent and serves as a framework within which the metropolitan municipality can coordinate its activities accordingly. It, thus, is a working yardstick against which the metropolitan municipality can measure the implementation of their mandates, particularly any successes or inefficiencies in execution. The PDP, coupled with the IDP of the metropolitan municipality, prescribes the approach the municipality will undertake in rendering particular and specific services (City of Cape Town, 2017). Both the IDP and the PDP plans run over a five-year term and focus on enhancing the quality of life for all residents and citizens through improved socio-economic conditions.

The heart of the IDP consists of five strategic pillars that are its strategic objectives. The five pillars are: the well-run city, the opportunity city, the safe city, the caring city and the inclusive city (City of Cape Town, 2017:12) (the latter two cities are described in section 1.6 above). A municipal department does not necessarily need to focus on all the strategic pillars. Rather, specific municipal departments focus on specific strategic pillars. For example, a 'safe city' is realised through the Safety and Security Directorate of the metropolitan municipality, whereas the 'well-run city' (City of Cape Town, 2017) is the responsibility of the Corporate Human



Resources Management (City of Cape Town, 2020:42). The latter department is tasked with ensuring that all departments, including the Department of Recreation and Parks, are adequately and appropriately staffed. Collaboration between departments (horizontal collaboration) thus serves to ensure that all five strategic pillars of the IDP are successfully pursued. The metropolitan municipality itself, however, is not an island. It remains dependent on provincial and national government when delivering services. Collaboration at a vertical level, therefore, is also essential in delivering services and improving socio-economic conditions at a local level. The IDP recognises the municipality's pivotal role and, in the same manner, places an obligation on the municipality to exercise its autonomy and resources jointly in providing recreational facilities that ultimately contribute towards the achievement of social cohesion. The IDP, being needs-specific, is a tailored document and, therefore, differs from one municipality to the next. In a broader and more specific context, the implementation of the IDP requires a custom-made approach that, in some instances, is community-specific. Essentially, the IDP is a super-plan providing a framework wherein the aforementioned development areas are addressed in meeting the needs of the people within a specific municipality, that is extended to specific communities within the municipality. Social cohesion produces healthier and more prosperous communities. A community park provides access to spaces for people to relax and engage in healthy living. In an ever-challenging economy, the community park's provision of free recreational opportunities is potentially a perfect platform to create stronger, healthier and unified communities. All the aforementioned attributes provide opportunities for communities to thrive.

Saayman (1997:99) affirms the responsibility of local authorities for the provisioning of community parks in highlighting that the private sector cannot be solely responsible for providing these recreational facilities.

### **2.2.3 Organisational Development and Transformation Plan**

The Council of the selected municipality approved the final Organisational Development Transformation Plan (ODTP) on 24 August 2016. This plan was recommended to the new council as part of the administration's bid in supporting the legislative obligations included in the Integrated Development Planning process (City of Cape Town, 2017). One of the objectives of ODTP is to streamline service delivery to citizens within the metropole, and in doing so work towards a 'value-adding' governance system (City of Cape Town, 2017:16).

The amalgamation of the Sports, Recreation and Amenities Department and Parks Department under the banner of the ODTP suggests that the two departments would need to share and combine resources in the delivery of world class parks and programmes. According to the executive summary, the Community Services and Health Directorate consists of and administers service delivery through the following five departments: Recreation and Parks; City Health; Social Development and Early Childhood Development; Planning, Development and Project Management Office and Library and Information Services (City of Cape Town, 2020). The directorate underpins the following strategic pillars of the selected municipality and contributes to the well-run and the safe city (City of Cape Town, 2020) (referred to above).

The directorate is one such entity within the municipality responsible for implementing the Social Development Strategy (SDS) and, as a result, maintains co-ordination across all directorates. In addition, this directorate, being a part of the transversal safe communities working group, propels the following transversal working groups through the Social Development and Early Childhood Development Department:

- Integrated youth development strategy, with its implementation plan,
- Social and situational crime prevention strategy, with its implementation plan and
- Alcohol and other drug harm minimisation strategy, with its implementation plan.

Levasseur, Richard, Gauvin and Raymond (2010) reason that social participation is a vital component for prosperous and healthy ageing. They elaborate that social participation is focused mainly on the individual's participation in activities that create an opportunity to interact with others in a community or society. The rationale of the ODTP in developing streamlined services to communities is to encourage participation by allowing members to provide feedback upon service provision and responding to their suggestions and complaints (City of Cape Town, 2017).

#### **2.2.4 Parks Development Policy (PDP)**

The PDP, administered by the Recreation and Parks Department, is the policy used to regulate all resources and activities towards the realisation of attractive and well managed parks (City of Cape Town, 2001). The desired outcomes of the PDP are twofold. Firstly, to create parks that adequately meet the requirements of communities and, secondly, to ensure the long-term viability of park improvements, especially when capital and operating resources are limited. This approach encompasses the upgrading of existing parks and provisioning of recreational facilities. The selected municipality recognises the imperative contribution that recreational facilities and parks can make in the lives of communities and individuals. This

acknowledgement has invoked a commitment to providing parks which as stated above are (a) of an excellent standard; (b) accessible and safe; (c) aesthetically pleasing and stimulating to users, particularly children; and that (d) satisfy the diverse needs of communities and specialised stakeholders, for example the physically impaired (City of Cape Town, 2001).

The implementation of the PDP is intended to give effect to two of the strategic pillars: the ‘caring city’ and the ‘inclusive city’ (City of Cape Town, 2001) (described above). The caring city provides those in need with community services such as community parks. SaferSpaces (2012) reinforces the potential that public places (parks) hold in being a stepping stone for communities to aspire to greater goals once its purpose of creating social cohesion is obtained. The PDP policy advises that social programmes in city parks can promote and foster social interaction in order to promote and maximise social development (City of Cape Town, 2015:5). The intervention of social programmes will not only attempt to promote and maximise social development but, in doing so, could potentially dispel criminal and antisocial activity (City of Cape Town, 2015:5). The question that arises is this: are social programmes taking place in community parks? In addition, the IDP prescribes that the selected municipality in its bid to be an ‘inclusive city’ aims to deliver custom-made parks for communities.

The constitutional obligations to dignity and health mentioned in the South African Constitution, coupled with the Recreation and Parks department’s vision of providing world-class facilities and programmes, task the municipality with the responsibility of providing well provisioned and managed parks that are well-used by community residents and visitors. This responsibility, therefore, essentially obliges the municipality to be held accountable in the execution, or lack thereof, in providing such facilities. The improved health of community members enabled through park usage underpins the right to health mandated by the South African Constitution.

Section 152 of the South African Constitution outlines the following responsibilities of local government:

- guaranteeing sustainable service delivery to communities,
- upholding a safe and healthy environment and
- promoting community inclusion and participation pertaining to local government matters.

The three aforementioned obligations placed on local government encapsulate and cement the relevant legislation and pave the way for the creation and maintenance of safe and invigorating community parks.

### **2.3 Role of parks**

Community parks are intended to be safe and lively spaces enjoyed by communities. They are not intended to be desolate spaces that provide opportunities for antisocial or criminal activity. Parks provide passive, unprompted and organised recreational prospects. Passive recreational actions include socialising, reading or simply relaxing and enjoying the environment. Indulging in relaxation eases stress. This fact is especially the case when individuals voluntarily engage in certain leisure activities. Tools used to enhance these passive recreational possibilities include the use of natural foliage and picnic spaces (Ellis, 2016:3). Odeku and Rudolf (2019) explain that relaxation is crucial to the well-being of individuals because it allows for the forging of an identity and self-fulfilment outside of work. Regardless of whether they are aware of doing so, all individuals are involved in some form of passive or active indoor or outdoor recreation activities. Cay (2015:302) insightfully advises that parks serve as useful and visually appealing spaces that provide serenity within the city. Amongst other services, they provide prospects for education, health and social activities. Denoon-Stevens and Ramaila (2018) allude to this fact in their research that aimed at highlighting the significance “of parks, libraries and sport and recreation facilities [including parks] in previously disadvantaged areas” for the benefit of the underprivileged. These authors conducted their case study in the Limpopo Province and focused on a specific facility known as the Mahwelereng Sports Node & Library (MSNL) in Mokopane. Mahwelereng is a township situated within the Mogalakwena Municipality that houses previously disadvantaged people. The MSNL comprises a library, a park and sports facilities and is intended to be multi-age and multi-use. This open-air public facility was envisaged to be a safe space where children could play under supervision, the youth could relax and seniors could enjoy the outdoors and, at the same time, exercise and be in the presence of younger adults. Denoon-Stevens and Ramaila (2018) documented their discussions with patrons at the node who expressed their appreciation of being able to utilise this space as a place of escape from home and work where they could relax, laugh, engage with others and achieve their fitness goals. The outdoor gym at the MSNL was noted as being instrumental in the recovery of a retired stroke victim. The improvement was first noted through a reduction in his disability. This physical recovery was made possible through the stroke victim’s use of the outdoor gym three times a day – his doctor attributed his rapid recovery to this activity. The stroke victim also gained friends who had “act[ed] as personal trainers” when he was in need of one. Another perceived health benefit was that some of the pensioners who regularly visited accessible and safe the facility no longer needed to use their walking sticks. Patrons both young and old stated that the space provided them with an opportunity to safely share their

experiences, and for children to play safely. Additionally, respondents advised that Mahwelereng holistically became a safer community in that safety and security was improved as a direct result of the Mahwelereng Sports Node & Libra.

Jones (2002:305) advises that, in an attempt to increase clientele the community park must attract rather than repel people and should be recognised as a hub for the community. The process of ensuring that social and recreational community needs are consistently satisfied is an especially important factor in creating an active and healthy community and, ultimately, a cohesive one. A thriving community park is one that attracts community members. It is not solely the physical design of a community park that will draw community members. Various activities and programmes that appeal to and/or address the needs of all community members also contribute to the community park's ability to provide a recreational environment.

Gaikwad and Shinde (2019) examined the impact that parks have in relation to active ageing. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002) defines active ageing as "...the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security, in order to enhance quality of life as people age". These scholars explored the association between the use of parks and the physical and mental health and social well-being of elderly people.

An exploratory study undertaken in Antalya, Turkey, was intended to develop an understanding of elderly individuals' preferences and consumption in parks. The thoughts, wants and needs of elderly individuals in relation to parks were revealed by means of an interview guide. The study concluded that passive recreational activities, including socialising with others and resting, are the more preferred activities (Yılmaz, Olgun & Şavklı, 2016). Levasseur, Richard, Gauvin and Raymond (2010:2141) reason that social participation is a vital component for healthy and prosperous ageing. They elaborate that social participation mostly focuses on the individual's participation in activities that create an opportunity to interact with others in the community.

The American National Recreation and Park Association (n.d.) lists the following as possible programmes: labour or volunteering opportunities to work in parks; wellness and health initiatives such as schemes for the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases, courses on cooking and good nutrition; activities that support holistic self-development through social events such as music, culture and dance courses as well as physical training schemes, including yoga or other exercise classes or sports leagues.

Gobster (2002:143) advises that two imperative objectives which park managers have in helping park users enjoy a satisfactory experience are to make available and manage the physical and social settings, as well as the facilities available and the programmes offered in

the park. The reality of catering for and meeting the needs of the entire community is impossible. This fact, however, does not exonerate government from attempting to make the community park a holistic recreational environment.

Francis (2002:3) advises that parks are one of the quickest and most compelling media for developing a feeling of community and a better quality of life. Such a broad design will ensure that a community park not only become a desirable location but also one in which the community is strongly vested. A successful community park, therefore, will instil a sense of both community pride and ownership. Jones (2002:18) urges that collaboration between the council and community volunteers can be a possible initiative to aid in the sustainable maintenance or even upgrading of urban parks. This collaboration would include a consultative process in which the council and the various volunteers (local groups, park users, residents and user groups) engage and combine efforts regarding decisions made around the design and upkeep of the local park. Jones' (2002) article is based on urban parks, however, the same principle can be applied to community parks.

## **2. 4 Challenges for park usage**

Das and Honiball (2016:1) noted that despite public parks being cited as essential components of urban residential areas, they are vastly underutilised. This situation is common in most South African cities. These authors further stated that literature suggests the following reasons for this situation: "accessibility, environmental and social factors". In addition, they cited other issues that attribute to the underutilisation of public parks, namely: unsuitable location, inaccessibility, lack of aesthetics, insufficient amenities and the presence of antisocial behaviour that includes crime or the fear thereof. According to a Project for Public Spaces (PPS) study, a global evaluation of public spaces concluded that the following four attributes contribute to successful public spaces: accessibility; people's participation in activities; an aesthetic and pleasant space where people meet to socialise. Willemse and Donald (2012:226) explain that the reasons for disadvantaged groups not visiting community neighbourhood parks include concerns regarding safety, poor maintenance and a lack of facilities. These authors elaborate on people's safety concerns citing a general feeling of being unsafe and poorly lit areas. Willemse and Donald (2012) further identify the following antisocial elements that cause people to feel unsafe in parks: the presence of homeless people, hostile strangers, gangsterism, criminal activity and drug and alcohol abuse. In their study, these authors sighted that safety concerns constituted the main reason for community members not visiting community neighbourhood parks. A respondent stated that parks must be secured due to the high volume

of crime in the area and added that it was not safe for small children to play in parks even when accompanied by their parents. The second highest percentage of respondents added that antisocial behaviour and offensive characters created a negative image that contributed towards challenges regarding park usage. A respondent encapsulated this view by stating “Keep our parks clean, free of drugs and gangsters”.

## **2.5 Community Participation in utilisation of Community Parks**

Kandil (2016) advises that enactment of public participation is vital to ensure “the democratisation of social values and better planning and fulfilment of public needs”. This author adds that the public participation process is beneficial in teaching the public specifically in terms of government development programmes. He elaborates by saying that this process could potentially influence community members with reference to social or personal changes. This behaviour will allow for the incorporation of diversity in terms of public interests, that may bring individuals together to exercise their right to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Kandil (2016) further explains that public participation is a mechanism to express personal interests as well as the concerns of both individuals and society relating to development plans, taking into account that the consequences of the planning activities would affect the general public and certain groups specifically. In addition to educating people and developing awareness that creates a better comprehension of stakeholders’ needs and demands, public participation also serves as a critical tool for creating a more efficient planning framework that results in successful resource management and planning. Public participation as described by an environmental agency is not a once off occurrence, but rather an ongoing process. This process is twofold for the entire duration of a project i.e., obtaining the public’s participation while, simultaneously, keeping them informed. Furthermore, it affords stakeholders the opportunity to be heard regarding outcomes that impact their lives (Environmental Agency, 2022).

Willemse (2010:109) notes that the participation of a community is integral to establishing a successful community park. This author speaks of community participation in a broader sense. Such participation should not be restricted to the communities having a voice and being actively involved in discussions regarding their preferred park facilities. Rather, community participation should extend to the formation of volunteer groups composed of community members. In common with Jones (2002), Willemse (2010) states that community participation entails the active involvement of community members in the upkeep of the park.

Ellis and Schwartz (2016:3) describe the process through which community development manifests as one in which community members themselves participate and engage in the improvements of environmental, social and economic conditions in that community. Through a process of consultation and allowing communities to participate in services rendered by the government in the pursuit of satisfying their needs, communities are persuaded to believe that they can influence decision-making which duly results in the restoration of trust in government (Jones; 2002:19). When members of the community develop a sense of ownership and civic pride in their local park, it fosters continuous use and active management. Active stewardship, coupled with a sense of ownership and consistent consumption of the park, is a product of community members feeling that they have a vested interest in their local park (Soileau, 2019). This process is comprehensive and democratic, because local authorities are responsible for the provision of recreational services and facilities that include parks (Saayman, 1997:99). Rossman and Schlatter (2000:115) observe that the recreation services sponsored by government are based on the idea of a democratic and inclusive process in which everyone can participate equally.

A quintessential demonstration of community participation and collaboration between residents, the municipality and non-profit and community-based organisations, was displayed in the revamping of the community park in Riverton Estate, Elsie's River. The delivery of a giant chess board in the park began with the construction of the board by the men and youth who reside in the community. The giant chess pieces were purchased by the Riverton Estate Residents' Association and are available for use at weekends and public holidays. This initiative drew attention from the Western Cape Chess Club, that which was inspired to donate five sets of chess boards. The Riverton community commemorated the project via the official launch of the Riverton Chess Academy. The launch began with the Bishop Lavis Cadets from one of the neighbouring communities marching through the community. This march allowed the cadets to showcase their acquired skills and, in so doing, lured residents to the park to enjoy a fun-filled day. At this event the community park hosted guest speakers who shared their thoughts and sentiments on the Riverton Estate's community park project. These speakers endorsed this effort in community upliftment, unity and the creation of a safe environment all made possible through community custodianship. Lastly, the City of Cape Town, that was represented at the launch, was thanked for its support in the provision and placement of trees and benches in the park (Netwerk24, 2016).

Another example of collaboration is that of the Thornhill Community Park situated in Green Point, Cape Town. The success of the 400m<sup>2</sup> park serves as living reality that collaboration is



a vital avenue to explore but, most importantly, that size should not be a deterrent in the implementation of successful parks. The collaboration included the private sector in the form organisations such as ‘Block’ and ‘Future Cape Town’ and the newly formed community group ‘Friends of Thornhill Park’, together with the City of Cape Town. The Managing Director of Block elaborated on the reason for the organisation investing in the public park adjacent to his residential development business. Simply put, the motivation was borne out of the understanding that the park is a community-owned and run space in which residents feel comfortable and in which they should take pride. He added that the investment was intended as an impetus for the establishment of a community asset and served as a representation of the neighbourhood.

Thornhill Community Park was the outcome of a landscape architect creatively envisaging the notion of a community garden in a neighbourhood that was characterised by rapid urbanisation, and exacerbated by the fact that outdoor space for many residents was restricted to their balconies. The garden would be an additional drawcard extending the children’s play equipment, which would be further enhanced by a sociable sitting wall that would preserve soil for a prospective herb or vegetable garden. The park would also offer adults a distinct opportunity to enjoy various forms of leisure activity.

A review of literature concerning successful small community parks indicates that a significant aspect of community control, particularly around personal safety, was community members volunteering their resources, including time, for the upkeep and development of the park. The director of Future Cape Town intuitively recognised that participation and indulgence from the community in terms of the earliest design stages and the communication method between all stakeholders throughout the project from the onset was a necessity. Construction of the Thornhill Community Park could only commence after the final design was presented to the community for input and was endorsed by the bulk of residents. A compliance and engagement process simultaneously was established with the strong and sustained support of the city. This support was clear on the park’s opening day, when the District Manager of Cape Town City Parks outlined the city’s vision and readiness to collaborate with communities in an attempt to use a restricted budget for the broader well-being of the park’s users. A significant benefit from the partnership arose from residents becoming aware that they could apply for their own key to the park that allowed them access to this prized space after hours, for activities such as birthday celebrations, film screenings or merely enjoying music (Petzer, 2016).

Soileau (2019) explains that the perception of public areas as being unsafe is increased by the occurrence of vandalism. It has been suggested that the swift removal of litter and graffiti is a

clear indication that the park is being maintained. Furthermore, sufficient lighting is another mechanism to keep parks safe and, in so doing, help community members feel safer (Soileau, 2019). Groff and Maccord (2011) reason that the design of parks attracts a particular category of people and, thus, may attract a criminal element. The potential benefits associated with people who would regularly visit their ideal park are a counter to the prevalent perception that parks are unsafe. A ‘victims of crime’ survey conducted and published by Statistics South Africa for 2014/15 contained a question about activities that respondents could not engage in because of crime. The main theme ‘going to open spaces or parks’ was the most cited answer, consisting of 36.9% of the sample (StatsSA, 2015). According to South Africa Crime Rate & Statistics 1996-2019, the crime rate escalates annually. The following examples illustrate the rate of increase (SSA, 2019):

- From 2012 to 2013 - Increase of 3.5%
- From 2013 to 2014 - Increase of 2.84%
- From 2014 to 2015 - Increase of 3.68%
- From 2015 to 2016 - Increase of 0.59%
- From 2016 to 2017 - Increase of 5.59%.

The seriousness of the high crime rate in South Africa, specifically within public areas and/or spaces such as public parks, has brought about the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention Programme (VCP). The VCP Programme is a joint venture between the South African and German governments. The VCP Programme aims towards the realisation of safer communities in South Africa by promoting a methodical approach towards the prevention of violence and crime. Furthermore, the programme seeks to endorse collaboration of different sectors, state and non-state actors, as well as all spheres of government in combining its strengths and resources. The enactment of this programme emphasises the seriousness of the level of crime in South Africa. In addition, it highlights the intention of the South African government in its pursuit of Chapter 12 of the National Development Plan which is Building Safer Communities (VCP, 2012).

Ramutsindela (2004) advises that the primary rewards associated with public recreational parks are rendered meaningless by the continuous crime occurring in these spaces. Safety in society and communities, namely safety in public recreational and leisure places, are critical factors for developing habitable and prosperous cities that are welcoming to both residents and tourists (Mtengwane, 2018). Sadly, safety is not always a priority for local governments and cities. This situation frequently exists because the responsibility for ensuring a safer environment has been vested with the national authorities, regardless of safety being one amongst many of the highest demands of South African citizens (Mtengwane, 2018). Owing to increases in the

already high crime rate, the government certainly needs to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of criminal law and legislation in order to curb criminality in public parks and other recreational and leisure places (Simpson, 2016).

A case study (Perry, Moodley & Bob, 2008:253-254) conducted in Reservoir Hills, a residential suburb in Durban, cited parks as being a haven for unsavoury elements, particularly where youngsters would congregate to participate in the consumption of drugs and/or alcohol. The park, thus, increasingly became a place associated with delinquent behaviour. In addition, respondents also indicated that the park was a hiding place for criminals. Reservoir Hills, now consisting of several informal settlements, was historically categorised as a predominantly Indian middle-income area in a Durban residential suburb.

Willemse's (2010) research focused on community/neighbourhood park usage in Cape Town. One of her findings was that fear was a significant and recurring reason amongst residents for not utilising parks, regardless of income groups. This situation manifests in fears regarding safety and problems of disorderliness, such as the presence of vagrants, drug abusers, gangsters and vandals who use the park for non-park related activities. In addition, there were fears surrounding the upkeep of the park as a result of persistent litter and defacement (Willemse, 2010:77).

Soileau (2019) notes that "a busy park is a safe park" and elaborates that scheduled activities and programmes could possibly make the public feel comfortable the entire day and into the evening. In addition, this author suggests that activities in the park, as far as possible, should be visible to people outside of the park. Business and planned events in the park could serve as a clear demonstration to community members that there are people present in the park and that something enjoyable is taking place (Soileau, 2019). Payne and Reinhard (2016:151) state "... legitimate park users would displace illegitimate park users". Hilborn (2009) observes that a place is so much more than a location. A place can acquire significance and, therefore, either be enjoyed constructively or destructively. Payne and Reinhard (2016:2) identified increased park usage as a conduit to decreased crime and delinquency and that a lack of natural surveillance increased delinquent behaviour. Hilborn (2009) emphasises that parks in the United States are not a policing priority, and that a police presence is only introduced when problems in the parks escalate to the extent of being a crisis to which the public demands a response. Hilborn (2009) introduces the concept of natural 'guardians' who assist in preserving and policing parks. Guardians are regular citizens going about their daily activities who are not restricted in terms of age, culture, gender or ethnicity. The visibility and behaviour of these guardians serve as a warning to potential offenders that criminal or antisocial behaviour will

not be tolerated. Guardians' ability to protect parks can be enhanced through programmes conducted by the police in which guardians are educated on their guardianship responsibilities. Payne and Reinhard (2016:136) note that accessibility, the capability of being surveyed within close proximity and the provision of safe spaces are essential components that should be included when designing community parks. Police and neighbourhood watch groups can work together to watch for illegal activity in parks. Through community policing, relationships between police officers and community members develop. It is rewarding for all involved when everyone assists with improving a park's environment (No Fault, 2019).

## **2.6 Summary**

The above literature review examined the legislative, strategic, theoretical and philosophical overview governing the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy concerning the selected municipality's managing of community parks. As with the implementation of any other policy, opportunities as well as challenges arise. Furthermore, this review presented suggestions and opportunities for optimal park usage, as well as highlighting the challenges resulting from the complex management of community parks. It indicated that optimal park usage is ensured through creating a safe leisure space for the majority, if not all park users, a situation that strengthens relationships and custodianship in communities. The combination of optimal park usage together with the proper security measures could be instrumental in marginalising criminal and antisocial behaviour. The above literature review demonstrated that the effective management of community parks could be persuasive in creating and maintaining healthy communities. However, it also revealed that world class parks and programmes are not simplistic processes. They are ongoing practices through which relationships are built and fostered. This chapter also presented suggestions and opportunities for optimal park usage because such a practice creates and strengthens relationships between community members as well as between the community and government and, furthermore, enhances community custodianship over parks.

The following chapter discusses the research methodology used to gain further insight into the topic under investigation.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter, namely the literature review, provided insight into the legislation governing community parks, the possible challenges encountered in relation to the efficient management of parks, as well as the potential benefits of community parks. This chapter provides insight into the research methodology employed throughout this study. In doing so the differentiation between qualitative and quantitative methodology is highlighted. This distinguishing between the two research approaches illustrates which research approach is suitable for this particular study. data collection method is defined next and the design of the research instrument selected to undertake the research study discussed.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A research plan is a strategy whereby the research participants are selected and the method for collected data from them established. The research design, therefore, contains a description of the process that the participants will be subjected to in order to achieve information from which conclusions concerning the research problem can be deduced (Welman *et al.*, 2005:52). The research project involves framing research objectives, collecting literature, designing a data collection instrument, selecting a sample population, conducting a survey amongst the sample population to collect data, analysing the data, generating findings based on the data, making recommendations based on the findings and concluding the research project.

### **3.3 Research Approach: Quantitative Research**

The generalised perception, with reference to quantitative research, is that it is thought to be a research approach utilised to produce data. This view is, however, rendered inadequate by the fact that both quantitative and qualitative research produce data. Creswell (2003), in a more suitable definition, states that quantitative research comprises collecting data in order to measure and subject this information to statistical treatment. This quantification and statistical analysis then is used to either prove or disprove “alternate knowledge claims” (Creswell, 2003:153). Quantification and statistical analysis therefore deduce that the data collected are of a numerical nature. In addition, these processes are not used to determine ‘why’ or ‘how’ a phenomenon has occurred. The aforementioned literature review reinforces the fact that the data collecting tools employed in quantitative research are unsuitable for the purpose of

interpreting data to enhance understanding. The primary aim of quantitative research is to pursue sampling methods that may include consumer surveys in which the results could be interpreted analytically and are susceptible to mathematical manipulation, thereby allowing the researcher to project impending events or quantities (Business Dictionary, n.d.). Kothari (2004:3) explains that “quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity for interpretation”.

### **3.3.1 Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Research**

Heale and Twyross (2015) define validity as the degree of accuracy applied to measuring a concept in a quantitative study. These authors further advise that the precision of a research instrument, known as its reliability, is the additional measure of quality. They elaborate that reliability exists when consistent results are obtained using exactly the same circumstances in numerous instances (Heale & Twyross, 2015).

Reliability refers to the congruence of a measurement (Heale & Twyross, 2015). These authors further illustrate that researchers wishing to complete an instrument intended to measure motivation ought to have relatively the same response on each occasion after completing the test. Though it may not be possible to give a precise calculation of reliability, different measures can arrive at an estimate of reliability (Heale & Twyross, 2015).

### **3.4 Research Approach: Qualitative Research**

Brink (1993:35) argues that the characteristics of qualitative research methods are intrinsically inappropriate for statistical or empirical calculations of rationality. Qualitative research can be described as any type of research that yields results not obtained through statistical methods or other mechanism of calculation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:17). Qualitative research, in which the researcher employs techniques such as observation, participation and semi-structured and structured interviews to obtain the data, is regarded as being capable of producing expressive data. The data collected in this manner, therefore, can be described and/or explained. Bashier, Afzal and Azeem (2008) argue that qualitative research encompasses the researcher’s application and collection of a selection of empirical materials. These empirical materials include: personal experience, case studies, observations, introspection, life stories, interviews, and historical, interactional and visual texts; all of which contain descriptions of routine and

problematic moments and meaning in an individuals' life (Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008). Merriam (2002:3) claims that at its root qualitative research is grounded in the notion that significance is socially constructed by individuals when interacting with their world.

Public administration, being embedded within the sphere of social sciences, encompasses the understanding of the participants being engaged in order to obtain comprehension regarding the specific subject matter. Social sciences are classified as a division of science that approaches the association and behaviour of human society, as well as the relationship between individuals as members of society (Merriam-Webster. n.d.). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) further explain that qualitative research comprises an explanatory, naturalistic examination of the world. They elaborate by saying that qualitative researched, therefore, observes phenomena in their native habitat with the intention of making sense of, or interpreting, the phenomena in relation to the meaning people assign to such phenomena (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:3-4). Myers (2013) insightfully teaches that a distinct advantage of qualitative research is that it enables the researcher to observe and comprehend the background within which decisions and actions occur. Decision and actions made by humans often can be understood only in context in which they occur; because the context grants the researcher insight into why an individual acted in a particular manner (Myers, 2013:5). This desire to obtain knowledge and a better understanding concerning the environment and decision making of the relevant municipality compelled the researcher to embark upon a qualitative research method. This researcher, therefore, employed research tools such as semi-structured interviews that produced data that can be analysed and interpreted by the researcher during the investigation.

### **3.4.1 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research**

Long and Johnson (2000:30) point out that notion of 'reliability' is usually associated with quantitative research because the instruments used to collect data are standardised. The authors, after conducting an analysis on the notion of 'reliability' as it relates to qualitative research, concluded that there is no need to adopt alternative language when assessing qualitative research. These authors undertook a similar exercise in respect of the concept of validity and reached the same conclusion. In reference to quantitative research Leung (2015:325) states that reliability is referred to as the precise reproducible methods and outcomes. This author further advises that because qualitative research comprises various models, the aforementioned definition of reliability is implausible. He, therefore, deduces that the crux of reliability for qualitative research depends on consistency. Leung (2015:325) also argues that when referring to validity in qualitative research, the suitability of the tools, procedures and data are invoked.

Validity in qualitative research relates to the “appropriateness” of the processes and tools employed and the data collected. This author further opines that validity is reliant on the research question being valid in relation to the desired results, the selected methodology being conducive for responding to the research question and the appropriateness of the sample and data analysis. Finally, the author concludes that validity is dependent on the outcomes “and conclusions are valid for the sample and context”.

### **3.5 Data collection**

Rimando, Brace, Namageyo-Funa, Parr, Sealy, Davis, Martinez and Christiana (2015:2025) advise that “data collection is critical to the social research process”. In addition, they argue that when properly applied data collection improves the standard of a social investigative study. Rimando *et al.* (2016:2026) highlight that the data collection and data analysis processes usually occur concurrently in qualitative research. They define the data collection process as the systematic collection of data for a specific purpose. They elaborate this definition by saying that the data are collected from an array of sources that include observation, focus groups, existing devices, existing records and interviews. Brynard and Hanekom (2006:35) reason that during the research process the most time is expended on collecting data. Without data it would not be possible to enhance one’s understanding of the research problem because the collected data adds new knowledge to the existing knowledge.

### **3.6 Data**

In scientific research data are acquired from primary, secondary and tertiary sources as explained below.

#### **3.6.1 Primary data**

Primary data are referred to as original data in that data are gathered personally by the researcher with the goal of the particular research study at hand (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:149). Primary data do not really exist until and unless developed as part of the consultant research process, dissertation or project (Brynard & Hanekom, 2006:36). This study gathered primary data by obtaining information from participants, such as the staff within the selected municipality, and various members of the relevant ratepayer associations within Wards 25 and 28 of the selected municipality, through the process of interviews. The seven officials representing the selected municipality along with the 12 officials of the Ratepayers Associations identified in Chapter 1 to participate in the study, did participate, representing 100% response rate.



### **3.6.2 Secondary data**

Secondary data comprise the collection of information by other researchers concerning other similar research problems. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) define secondary data as information that already exists in some form. These authors elaborate on this statement by providing examples. Secondary data can take the form of valuable resources, presenting an opportunity to enhance the perspective of existing data, explore data that have not been analysed fully, or to construct the basis for comparison with freshly collected data (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:16). Sources for secondary data for this research study included making use of previous similar studies undertaken and information obtained from publications relevant to the study.

## **3.7 Data collection method**

This research study employed an interview guide for the purpose of data collection.

### **3.7.1 Interviews**

In spite of the fact that the purpose of the interview is to comprehend the perspective of the interviewee, researchers nonetheless will have a distinct sense of the subject matter they intend discussing. It is for this reason that the researcher is deemed pivotal in guiding the interview process and must be capable of effectively 'stage-managing' the interview with the objective of meeting the purpose of the research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:144). An interview involves direct physical interaction with the individual who is being questioned (Bless, Higson-Smith, & Sithole, 1995:106).

A purposeful conversation, namely the research interview, is conducted between two or more people, compelling the interviewer to establish rapport with the interviewee before asking short and clear questions. The interviewee is expected to listen attentively and respond willingly (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:372). During an interview the researcher "speaks" directly to the respondent, asking questions and recording answers. A positive relationship between the researcher and participant is helpful when using open-ended questions to collect data and handling sensitive issues. Interviews are also flexible in that they can be conducted in various places, (at work or home) and researchers can increase participants' participation rates by explaining the project and its value (Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel 2003:134) prior to commencing the research process.

An interview's format is tied to its aim. The more structured formats are typically associated with the quantification of the data generated, whereas in qualitative approaches, interviews are typically semi-structured or unstructured, encouraging the interviewee to talk at length about a

subject and shape the direction of the interview as needed (Cassell, 2015:12-13). A structured interview consists of a systematic process that should run according to a clear plan and the interview responses follow systematically (Alvesson, 2011:9).

Structured interviews are based on an established questionnaire – a set of questions with fixed sequence of presentation and wording, as well as more or less specific indications regarding how to answer each question (Bless *et al.*, 1995:106). Structured interviews employ questionnaires that are based on a preset and standardised or identical set of questions, that are referred to as ‘interviewer-administered questionnaires’. Structured interviews are used to collect quantifiable data and, thus, are also termed ‘quantitative research interviews’ (Saunders *et al.*, 2012: 374).

Structured interviews require that the researcher conducts all the interviews in exactly the same manner, using the same interview sequence in order to avoid inconsistent interviewing practices that may result in biases (Hair *et al.*, 2003:135). The interviewer asks a participant a series of questions from a previously created questionnaire, known as an interview schedule, and notes the latter's responses. The interview schedule provides with little freedom for deviation by either researcher or participant (Welman *et al.*, 2005:165).

### **3.7.2 Semi – structured interviews**

A semi-structured interview usually consists of prearranged questions that each interviewer follows, however, it does make provision for some flexibility in the administration of both the predetermined questions or additional follow-up questions. Semi-structured interviews generally prescribe that the interviewer explores themes within a framework. These themes are normally specified and, compared to unstructured interviews, are more limiting (Huss, 2008:29).

The interviewer in a semi-structured interview does not always rigorously follow a prescribed list of questions. The open-ended questions asked will allow for a discussion rather than a standard question and answer format. Semi-structured interviews in many cases precede observation, casual and unstructured interviewing in order to provide an opportunity for the researcher to develop a keen understanding of the topic of interest that is necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions (Doyle, 2017).

As stated above, a semi-structured interview has an overall structure and direction, however, it also allows sufficient flexibility to include unstructured questioning. A good example of a semi-structured interview is a focus group. In addition, focus groups are also considered to be

a type of qualitative research. Focus groups are typically classified as informal discussions comprising of eight or twelve participants. Although it is unstructured, the researcher guides the group to stay on track and to not stray from the primary topic. In addition, the researcher encourages participants to respond to the research questions in their own words as well as to elaborate on their responses (Hair *et al.*, 2003:135).

The semi-structured interview is a qualitative method that can be used to guide the participants chosen to share their views and opinions on the research topic. This study employed semi-structured interviews to gather raw data from the participants. An interview guide was utilised as the tool to collect data regarding the utilisation of community parks offered by the selected municipality in the Wards 25 and 28. Furthermore, it presented information that can be considered for implementation by the said municipality regarding community parks.

### **3.7.3 Interview Guide**

The interview guide is a tool envisaged to provide guidance as well as keep the researcher focused while conducting the semi-structured interviews to collect data (Welman, *et al.*, 2005:166). The rationale behind the interview guide is that of the theoretical conceptual framework established in the above literature review. The purpose of the interview guide is to collect data from an insider's perspective to adequately answer the research question – the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy within a metropolitan municipality in the Western Cape. The focus of the interview guide employed in this research study was placed on the key areas identified in the literature review in the previous chapter:

- The role of parks within cities,
- The challenges in running public parks efficiently, and
- The guidelines for efficient running of public parks.

The second area that the interview guide focused on is how to develop parks that satisfactorily address the needs of communities, and ensure the long-term sustainability of park developments, particularly in situations where capital and operating resources are limited. The third area of the interview guide dealt with the recognition of the important role that parks and recreational facilities can play in the lives of residents and visitors. The fourth aspect of the interview guide focused on the potential of parks for contributing to community custodianship and pride as well as improved psychological wellbeing by providing opportunities for informal sport and recreation and spaces that assist in developing healthy individuals and, ultimately, healthy communities.

The desired effect of the interview guide as stipulated previously is to guide the data collection process. With reference to this research study, the interview guide served the dual purpose of providing answers to each of the research questions and, in so doing, afforded documented evidence for analysis. According to King (2004), (in Cassel & Symon, 2004:14), the interview guide highlights themes that the interviewer intends covering during the course of the interview. The compilation of the interview guide is grounded in the literature review and seeks to investigate the findings of the reviewed studies. The interview guide was not altered as new themes and topics did not materialise during the interviews. The research guide, therefore, can be considered as an ever-changing instrument that is compatible with the case research design. As alluded to previously, the case research strategy provides an insider's perspective and emerging themes and constructs that warrant investigation. It is for this reason that the interview guide needs to be flexible.

King (2004), in Cassel & Symon (2004:13), in his study of "innovation in services provided for people suffering from a terminal illness and being cared at home", made use of an interview guide and designed it differently for different professional groups. The understanding of the author was that it would be inappropriate to use the same interview guide for different occupational groups – "Initially we sought to develop a single guide appropriate for both professional groups but this proved impossible because of the differences in the nature of their involvement". This discovery is significant and applicable for this research study in view of the different groups that comprise the sample population. Thus, the interview guide was altered according to specific interest groups and used differently to collect data. The focus or development of the interview guide was influenced by the various participants' post level in the organisational structure as well as the occupational group. It was anticipated that the senior management of the municipality would have both an understanding and deep insight regarding the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy. Within the aforementioned context, it was anticipated that the senior management from their occupational perspective would focus on the phenomenon being discussed. These differences, therefore, were taken into account in the compilation of the interview guide. If the research was mainly working with the provision of community parks, then more emphasis was placed on the implementation aspects of the interview guide. This process, however, does not imply that other facets of the interview guide were not explored. It is important to highlight that the greatest emphasis was placed on the operational aspect of the participant during interviews. The interview schedules utilised, (Annexure 1 for the municipality officials and Annexure 2 for the Ratepayers Associations and Community Based Organisations) was compiled according to its appropriateness for the

research topic regarding the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy.

### **3.7.4 Research Population**

Welman *et al.* (2007:53) define population as:

... the full set of cases from which a sample is taken. In sampling, the term ‘population’ is not used in its normal sense, but as the full set of cases to be covered in the research and needs not necessarily be people.

The research population for the selected municipality is 4,890,000.

## **3.8 Sampling**

Sampling is referred to as the selection of research units from which data will be extracted for the intended study.

A sample is defined as a smaller set of data that a researcher selects from a larger population by using a pre-defined selection method. These elements are known as sample points, sampling units or observations. Creating a sample is an efficient method for conducting research.

### **3.8.1 Probability sampling**

Probability sampling can be defined as any method of sampling that employs some method of random selection. A random selection method is made possible through the assurance of the various units within the population having equal probability of being chosen (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:78) a probability sample comprises elements in the population chosen randomly and is probable for selection. The probability of selected units are often equal resulting in the representation of case groups in the sample in their true proportions. From this it can be inferred that probability sampling is a range of techniques that recruit research participants through various ways of random/unsystematic selection, in order to provide equal opportunities to all of its research population. Ritchie and Lewis (2003:78) indicate that there are various types of probability sampling strategies that include systematic random sampling, simple random sampling, multi-stage sampling and stratified random sampling.

### **3.8.2 Non-probability sampling**

The differentiation between non-probability and probability sampling is that whilst non-probability sampling does not include random selection, probability sampling does (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). Non-probability sampling entails the deliberate selection of units to reflect specific characteristics of individuals or groups within the sampled population. The sample is

not intended to be statistically representative: the odds of selection for each element are unknown but, rather, the aspects of the population are utilised as the basis of selection (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:78).

This practice suggests that non-probability sampling is a method that the researcher uses to purposely select the research sample and its participants. The researcher has previously monitored, evaluated and selected the possible sample participants. Types of non-probability sampling include (Welman *et al.*, 2007:56).

- Accidental/incidental sampling,
- Quota sampling,
- Purposive sampling,
- Snowball sampling,
- Self-selection sampling and
- Convenience sampling.

### **3.8. 2 Purposive sampling defined**

Ritchie and Lewis (2006:78) state that purposive sampling is exactly what the name proposes. Members of a sample are selected with a 'purpose' in relation to key criterion for the purpose of representing a location or type. This process has two prime objectives. In covering all the subject matter, the first purpose is to guarantee that all relevant core constituencies are pursued and the second is to ensure that, within each of the key criteria, a degree of diversity is included in such a way that it allows for the exploration of the influence of the characteristic concerned. Purposive sampling methods as indicated earlier were used in this study through interviewing the Senior Management of the Recreation and Parks Departments in Wards 25 and 28 of the selected municipality, as well as the chairpersons of community-based organisations that are involved in the overseeing of community parks and conducting our research study with them. This research study employed non-probability, purposive sampling. The research participants were purposely selected due to their vast experience within local government and their working experience within Wards 25 and 28. The participants were as follows:

- The Area Manager Head in the Recreation and Parks Department at the selected municipality,
- The Area Head in the Recreation and Parks Department at the selected municipality,
- The Superintendent in the Recreation and Parks Department at the selected municipality responsible for parks within Wards 25 and 28,

- The Sub-Council Manager within the selected municipality responsible for parks within Wards 25 and 28,
- The Ward Councillors for Wards 25 and 28 within the selected municipality and
- Senior officials of the Ratepayers Associations and Community Based Organisations within Wards 25 and 28.

### **3.8.3 Data analysis**

Qualitative research is concerned with the study of the social sciences in relation to natural settings. Its abundance and complexity prescribe that there are various mechanisms that can be employed in the analysis of the social sciences. The ‘knock-on’ effect of this situation alludes to the notion of several perspectives and procedures being employed in the analysis of qualitative data. Welman et al. (2007:221) explain that “...content analysis can be described as a quantitative analysis of qualitative data”. These authors elaborate by describing content analysis as a basic technique that incorporates measuring the frequent and consecutive use of specific words, phrases or concepts with regard to establishing keywords or themes. Content analysis is an extensive term that encapsulates almost every analytical technique that could be utilised to withdraw disparate significance from information. Data analysis is considered to be the nucleus activity of research. This process is described as being observations made from collected data, and a conclusion being derived. Richards and Morse (2007) (in Seers, 2012) describe the process of data analysis as “... one of transformation and interpretation”. Richie and Spencer (1994:186) state that even though it appears that the process of analysis appears to be very structured and mechanical, nonetheless it is necessary for the process to be performed. Vos (2004:344) asserts that rather than a mechanical analysis process, the analysis is founded on insight, hunches and intuition. Miles and Huberman (2002:54) explain that data analysis involves a structured process of scrutinising, arranging and charting data according to significant issues and themes.

The qualitative research approach was pursued in this research project. Walliman (2017:148) alludes that the analysis of data gathered through the qualitative research instrument is founded on data extracted mostly in the form of words, instead of that which are produced in numbers. This process is circular in the sense that analysis continues while data are being acquired and evaluation and interpretation follow, this method is repeated until all units have been evaluated and no more valuable information remains to be discovered. Miles and Huberman (1994) (in Sarantakos, 2000:314) affirm that the outcome of the analysis process is a huge volume of data that differs from quantitative data as follows:

- it appears in words,
- it has been collected in different ways, and
- it needs to be refined before it is ready for use.

The data acquired by means of interviews are analysed through content analysis. This analysis identifies common themes and reports on the trends identified in these themes.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter has defined research methodology and, in doing so, differentiated between quantitative and qualitative research methodology. This analysis has aided the researcher in selecting the qualitative research method best suited for this study. The selection of participants was achieved through a purposive sampling method. Semi-structured interviews were identified as the most suitable data collection procedure. The analysis acquired through the data collection is discussed and elaborated upon in the next chapter.



## Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the research methodology that was applied in this study, namely the qualitative research approach by means of face-to-face interviews. This chapter analyses the data that was collected for the study according to the objectives of the study. The principal themes mentioned in this chapter include the implementation of policy, the process of community participation, community participating challenges, utilisation of parks by the community, and improvement of parks.

### 4.2 Demographics of research participants

A sample of research participants was chosen purposively to participate in the interviews for this research study. The sample comprised one Area Manager, one Area Head, one Sub-Council Manager, two Superintendents, two Ward Councillors and 13 representatives from community organisations.

The interviews took the format of a semi-structured approach. Table 1 below contains the demographic information of the research participants:

Table 1: Age and Gender of participants

Participant	Status	Gender	Age
Participant 1	Chairperson of Inspire Network Chairperson of CPF GBV committee Elsies SAPS On Heath Committee Cluster GBV Help desk coordinator of Inspire Network	Female	50
Participant 2	Cravenby Municipal Issues (founder) Secretary: Cravenby Neighbourhood Watch RUCDI (Ravensmead, Uitsig Cravenby)	Male	55

	<p>Development Initiative)</p> <p>RDA (Ravensmead Development Action)</p> <p>Initiator of a major recycling project at a non-fee paying primary school.</p>		
Participant 3	<p>Served on the Elsies River CPF Sub Sector 1 Executive Forum, Originally Elected as Secretary, afterwards as an Interim Chair for a couple of years.</p> <p>Secretary for Salberau Residents Ass. (SRA) NHW from 2017 to date.</p>	Female	44
Participant 4	<p>Faith No Fear (My organisation)</p> <p>Inspire Incorporate</p> <p>Abbas Restoration</p> <p>CPF (Community Police Forum Sector 3 and Neighbourhood Watch)</p>	Female	49
Participant 5	<p>Inspire Network (Chief Executive Officer)</p> <p>Elsies River Community Policing Forum (Public Relations Officer)</p> <p>United Public Safety Front (Regional Coordinator)</p>	Male	56
Participant 6	<p>Founder of True Care Foundation</p>	Female	53
Participant 7	<p>CEO of Inspire Alliance</p>	Male	55

Participant 8	Chairperson: The Range Epping Forest Association	Female	64
Participant	Chairperson: Yahweh Community Outreach	Female	51
Participant 10	VEP Saps Ravensmead - Trauma Support Worker  Ravensmead Development Action Group - Coordinator  Donna's Haven - Director  Ward Committee Members - The Subcouncil 6  Sector 2 Sub Forum CPF Ravensmead SAPS - Secretary.	Female	50
Participant 11	Chairperson - The Range and Epping Forest Association	Female	64
Participant 12	Secretary - The Range and Epping Forest Association	Female	61
Participant 12	Treasurer - The Range and Epping Forest Association	Female	64

From Table 1 above it can be concluded that the typical community participant falls within the 44 to 64 years age group

Table 2: Participants career demographics

Participant	Rank	Experience in local government	Gender	Age
Participant 1	Alderman (Ward Councillor)	1988-2023 (35 years )	Male	61
Participant 2	Ward Councillor	2014-2023 (9years )	Female	61
Participant 3	Superintendent	2014-2023 (9years)	Female	38

Participant 4	Superintendent	2000-2023 (23years)	Male	49
Participant 5	Sub Council Manager	1996-2023 (27years)	Female	57
Participant 6	Head: FM PMO, Recreation and Parks	1991-2023 (32years)	Male	59
Participant 7	Area Manager: Recreation and Parks	1991-2023 (32years)	Male	59

From Table 2 above it is clear that the typical council employee who participated in this research study is in the employment of the selected municipality with an average of 24 years' experience. The councillors have an average of 22 years' experience. The aforementioned indicates that the participants were clearly highly experienced and of a mature age and thus in an excellent position to respond to the questions.

### **4.3 Emerging Themes**

Data were analysed by theoretic analysis according to the key themes discussed in the sections below.

#### **4.3.1 Theme 1 : Implementation of the policy of parks**

The usefulness of parks is only realised when the policy governing the creation and management of parks is implemented effectively and efficiently. The participants were unanimous in their responses that the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy leaves much to be desired.

A Sub-Council Manager stated: "It is not appealing because you have vagrants occupying the spaces lately with a tent." The rest of the Councillors concurred with the Sub-Council Manager that the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy is not effective and stated: "... I have mixed feelings now. As much as it's our mandate as a caring city to develop, I have mixed feelings and more so within our previously disadvantaged areas. The fact that our parks have become gang territories is really a major concern."

Another Councillor said: "The residents are struggling to gain resources needed to meet their basic human needs. And then what happens is this results in vandalism and theft of infrastructure of our parks. Parks are also used to sleep and residents in certain communities

would rather want parks land to be utilised for housing ... because of the socio-economic problem, they do not value the parks space.”

Managers and community members agreed that interventions can be made to meet the challenges relating to the effective implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy regarding the utilisation of parks. The Sub-Council Manager said: “They have park buddies where you employ people who live around the park – one or two people around the parks and you employ that person as an EPWP worker to look after the park.”

The Area Manager supported the Sub-Council Manager by saying: “We as a department try to also do our part by employing the EPWP contractor thing and we over and above also have a thing that we call park buddie. And then obviously we have to work hand in hand with our Ward Councillors.”

One Ward Councillor said: “The challenges that we have is that safety is a major concern on our parks. So if you have safety buddies, you have safety personnel that can alleviate the challenges we have.”

Another Ward Councillor concurred by saying: “ ... We also really would like for communities to mobilise themselves with neighbourhood watches and they themselves to ... create a safer environment for these families.”

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2 – The process of community participation**

The implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy makes provision for participation by the community. The Sub-Council Manager indicated that the process of managing community parks generally leaves much to be desired. “ ... I almost want to say there’s no public participation ... you will get away with that in your greater Elsie’s River because people are just thankful if you do something. But if you go to Platteklouf, Constantia – you know you go those areas people are gonna want to know from you, but why are you doing this?”

The Area Manager concurred with this view by saying: “And the main reason for that is that the city employs professional people. I mean the people that are employed by the city, they are qualified ... what we do is that we engage with the community. It’s important to just engage with them to get an understanding of what will work for them in a park environment. But then it is up to the design.”

A Ward Councillor stated: “... that is the problem within any municipality. Although they do public participation the designing of parks is ultimately left over to the officials and they

consult with councillors. We need to transform the mind set, a conventional park doesn't necessarily mean that it will bring changes to the community.”

Referring to the quality of community participation, the Sub-Council Manager stated: “What is the quality of participation in my opinion – poor.”

A Superintendent responded as follows: “The participation is face-to-face and with certain requests in a certain manner, then the outcome is good. But when it's only done by one person who sends an email and you try to please one person or those two people, it's not.”

A Ward Councillor stated: “The quality of the participation is very - if I must have it from 0–10, like minus zero.”

A Representative of one of the Ratepayers Associations commented: “When they started this park here, we just saw stuff coming. We were asking “What(are) you doing now? What is this? Nobody knew what was gonna happen because there wasn't involvement, asking “what will be a good activity for the children? ... it was just put there and say we must enjoy it.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative responded as follows to community participation in the designing of parks: “Currently there is nothing ... we had Parks and Recreation come out to us, that was about 2018. And they actually wanted myself and another because they were going to show the layout and we actually had a say in the designing of it and the equipment (but it never happened due to people not wanting it there. So we do have a say in the designing of parks.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative stated: “The last time there was input was in 2009 with the upgrading so the community's input was taken into consideration. But the youth also has a vision of how they would like to see their place. So that question can be answered through a survey where the community says how they see parks and what their vision is. At the moment, there is not input because no input is requested.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative responded to the question of community participation in the maintenance of parks as follows: “Nothing my dear. I take the broom and then clean but I get fed-up sometimes. On a Monday I will get a blue bag and I will clean. I say to all the children in the street, “come we gonna clean the park”. From the above it is clear that community participation is very low because little effort is made by the municipality to involve the community in the decision making process.

### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Challenges in Park Maintenance**

Community participation elicited a number of ideas from a variety of stakeholders. The process, however, is a challenging one as stated by the Sub-Council Manager: “The only

involvement is that when we have park buddies”. The Area Manager responded: “Jobless people that actually always try to seek for opportunities. One challenge is that if the community do not take ownership of a public space it’s gonna go down in quality.”

The Ward Councillor responded: “Tenders is the main challenge to be honest. If there is a swing broken in the park, that particular person or contractor will just do that swing and not the other two swings that are on the same line. The challenge is that maintenance is very poor in our parks and that needs to be upped.”

Another Ward Councillor stated: “Our equipment is always at risk – serious challenges because they do get attacked. If there’s anything illegal happening (because gangsters do claim certain parks as their territory) and our staff want to come in and repair the equipment their lives are at risk because you’re disturbing these gangsters who do believe that it’s their territory. When I am in the area, they’ll come tell me: “Councillor get out of the area because we are gonna start shooting”. They are not going to do that to officials.”

A Superintendent mentioned: “Illegal dumping is quite bad. The vandalism is quite bad. And we would fix up swings as our example, and next day the chain will be missing. The chains are used for various things. I know the metal is quite popular but chains are used for various things so the chains would just disappear, it would just be stolen.” The challenges thus relate to poor service by tenders, broken parks equipment, vandalism and illegal dumping.

#### **4.3.4 Community utilisation of parks**

Public parks are essentially created for the members of the community at large. As a consequence, it is imperative that the municipality determines the extent to which the public parks are being utilised by the community. Should there be areas to address, the municipality needs to take the necessary interventions.

The Sub-Council Manager stated: “I think parks are being used regularly. Maybe not by parents or the grownups, but by children.”

A Superintendent mentioned that: “Most of the parks are used a lot. There’s not enough equipment for all the children in the parks. Most of our parks need more playing equipment because of the amount of children in the area making use of the park.”

The Area Manager stated: “Community parks are not always used for the purpose what it’s built for. People use it for anything. Sometimes you get people that actually are just there for mischief, people making a fire there on the playground equipment, on top of the rubber housing that’s meant to actually assist kids when falling.”

A Councillor stated: “Whether there are gangsters or not, children still utilise the park. It is really not under utilised, ... those whose parents are perhaps not at home, you’ll find them in the park., ... those who also don’t want to attend school, you’ll find them in the park.”

A Ratepayers Association Representative responded as follows to the question of how often the community utilises the parks: “On a daily basis children are using the park. Also people like NPOs, where they use the field for outreaches, for open air events and programmes. So the parks are used in the capacity that whoever wants to use it can use it and all the community can be reached.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative responded: “So there are different types. We get kids, you get gangsters, you get the teen having a party on a Friday or Saturday night in the park. Then you also get –but very seldom – the older citizens using the parks because the structure itself is not that nice anymore, like it used to be – vandalized and like there’s no seat and stuff but it’s being used though.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative stated: “Very rarely I would say. There is our community park where I’m sort of actively very involved with, and there the park is rarely used for recreational purposes other than Sunday soccer, but mostly used for dumping. Another park is so isolated and so dangerous that I would not take my kids to go and play there. So parks in the community are rarely used for recreation. They are mostly used for criminal activity.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative responded as follows to the question regarding the biggest challenge for successful park utilisation: “Because of the parks being on the level that they are it is unsafe for our children. So I can’t tell my child now “go play in the park”. I have to be there because of the hazards and stuff there, the ground is not level, and the broken glass and fence. I can’t say my child can play alone in the parks. I need to be there to supervise.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative stated: “The biggest challenge would be an enclosed parks with gates. And even those with signs indicating “no loitering, no vandalizing and at certain time the sound must be off. As a neighbourhood watch, you can have shifts there. Because we are eyes and ears and visibility. We can’t expect the police or law enforcement to be there 24/7 but as a neighbourhood watch and informing your neighbours, the normal aunty and uncle in the road just keep an ‘eye out’ and then be the eyes and ears.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative said: “The biggest challenge is gang violence. As a community we are looking for facilities - a place where we could run our workshops for the community. I’ve seen out workshops and through case scenario many women in the past standing up and becoming trauma workers in our area.”



Another Ratepayers Association Representative responded: “Safety, I think. Safety would be first, proper lighting would be important for after-hours’ use of facilities.”

#### **4.3.5 Improvement of Community Parks**

Regarding suggestions to improve the utilisation of community parks, the Sub-Council Manager stated: “A dedicated person should be appointed by the Law Enforcement Division, with the service being delivered on a 24 hour basis.”

A Superintendent suggested: “We need to employ EPWP people to monitor the place, almost like a safety officer.”

A Ward Councillor responded as follows: “I will answer the question in twofold. One is that we have park buddies that immediately alleviate the flight risk-robbery or mugging within parks. That immediately bring(s) a safety measure to that park. Secondly, Law Enforcement to enforce by-laws ... but not necessarily stationed at the park, but the buddy is the one that can bring a safety measure to that particular park.”

A Ratepayers Association Representative stated: “The suggestion that we have as a community is that we must be heard. Here are people that are talented that can make this park into like a museum... why are you using other people where you can use your own people so they can uplift the community?”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative stated: “Well, we can easily convert out park into an exercise park, for example we have many seniors and handicapped people who are sitting in wheelchairs. These people aren’t getting therapy and alike anymore because everything has now changed at the hospitals so if they make an appointment for therapy today then they have to wait for two months or three months to be able to go and see the therapist at the day hospital. So if we say for example we can convert one of the three pitches into a sort of exercise park where exercise can take place. Even if that person comes with his wheelchair and throws a ball, then that forms part of outside activities, especially the seniors and handicapped people and for us as well. Many of us are chronic – we need to exercise, we need to eat right. So if we have something like that, a facility like that then we can ask “Touching Nations” to come in. Their nurses can come and take blood pressure, and have talks there. They can even show us how to eat healthy and how to live a healthy lifestyle.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative stated: “How can the police, Law Enforcement and the community work together to improve safety measures? The neighbourhood watch needs to be structured in such a way that it is a motivation for the youth to join. The Walking Bus made such a difference to keep the routes and the schools safe. So one should have a

similar programme that can protect parks and sports facilities and projects within the community.”

Another Ratepayers Association Representative responded: “My suggestion is that they enclose parks and put somebody in control and who is known to the people. The Sub-Council Manager as well as the Superintendent previously mentioned at looking at employing an EPWP to look after the park. A time is set out when the park can be used. Parties can be arranged in the park through the person in charge of the park”.

Another Ratepayers Association Representative mentioned; “We should use parks for youth development. You can take learning into a more neutral environment. Certain areas of parks can be used for food gardens where we are dealing with malnourished children. So if you have structured food gardens and community spaces you can improve the quality of life of both the young and the elderly”. Suggestions for improvements are the appointment of park buddies and the fencing off of parks. The park buddy is an EPWP worker who receives a stipend. The success of park buddies were highlighted by members of both, representatives of the selected municipality as well as representatives of the Ratepayers Associations and Community Based Organisations. The researcher will highlight this finding as part of the report to the selected municipality upon completion of his dissertation. In addition , the researcher will suggest in a report to the selected municipality the possibility of having demarcated areas for food gardens in parks.

#### **4.4 Findings**

The major findings emanating from the interviewees’ responses are as follows:

4.4.1 The implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy within the selected municipality is not effective;

4.4.2 The process of getting the community to participate in managing parks leaves much to be desired;

4.4.3 Parks are not adequately maintained;

4.4.4 Parks are not being utilised optimally by the community at large, and

4.4.5 Community Parks require extensive improvement.

These findings are discussed below.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

The aforementioned findings are discussed as follows:

#### **4.5.1 The implementation of the policy for parks within the municipality is not effective**

One of the research objectives relates to the legislative framework governing the operation of community parks. The Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 prescribes that the local government is obliged to promote a safe and healthy environment (South Africa, 1996). The IDP consists of five pillars, one of which is the safe city, that includes the importance of the provisioning of recreational facilities to the community in the form of parks which is highlighted by Saayman(1997:99), when he states that the responsibility rests with local government since the private sector cannot provide such facilities.

The selected municipality has introduced the Community Parks Development Policy to carry out the strategic pillars of the ‘caring city’ and the ‘inclusive city’. From the interviews conducted during the research process it can be deduced that the community does not utilise the parks for their intended purposes because the facilities are inadequate, or the community does not feel safe to use the facilities in the park.

#### **4.5.2 The process of getting the community to participate in managing parks leaves much to be desired.**

The significance of community participation in the management of parks is emphasized by Willemsse (2010:109), stating that it is a critical requirement for a successful community park. It involves community members actively participating in the maintenance of the park. Ellis and Swartz (2016:3) describe the process through which community development manifests. This is a process in which community members participate and engage in the improvement of environmental, social and economic conditions in that community. Jones (2002:19) mentions that communities are persuaded to believe that they are able to influence decision-making when they are consulted by government, and allowed to participate in services that are rendered by government.

Examples of successful community participation are the revamping of the community park in Riverton Estate, Elsie's River, and the Thornhill Community Park situated in Green Point. The majority of community parks do not receive the support of the community in enabling their efficient management, something that the municipality has to engage with in order to improve the management of community parks. The aforementioned examples included community participation in both the design of the park, as well as the launching of the finished projects where the community was involved.

#### **4.5.3 Parks are not adequately maintained**

The perception of parks being unsafe is increased due to acts of vandalism. A clear indication that the park is being maintained is when litter and/or graffiti are removed swiftly (No Fault, 2019). The White Paper on Sport and Recreation places an obligation on local authorities to manage and maintain the infrastructure for recreation in municipalities, metros and districts (Republic of South Africa, 2012:54). Jones (2002:18) suggests sustainable maintenance of urban parks is a possibility when council collaborates with the community. This author further explains that the collaboration is a consultative process consisting of government and various volunteers engaging jointly in decisions regarding the design and upkeep of their local park. Willemse and Donaldson (2012:226) highlighted the lack of maintenance resulting in disadvantaged groups not visiting their community neighbourhood parks.

#### **4.5.4 Parks are not being utilised optimally by the community at large.**

The constitutional obligations to dignity and health mentioned in South Africa's Constitution, coupled with the department's vision of providing world-class facilities and programmes, task the municipality with the responsibility of providing suitably equipped, safe and well-used parks.

As previously mentioned by Duygu (2015:302) in Chapter 2 above, parks provide serenity to the city in that they are visually appealing as well as a useful space. In addition, parks provide opportunity for social activities, education and healthy activities. Denoon-Stevens and Ramaila (2018), as previously mentioned, supplement this finding in that during their discussions with patrons who visited a sports node, the authors documented the appreciation of the patrons for the following reasons: the utilisation of the space gave them the opportunity to engage with others, achieve fitness goals, relax and laugh, as well as allowed them to escape from work and home. In attempting to increase the parks clientele, the community should perceive the park to be a hub. Parks, therefore, should attract people and not repel them (Jones, 2002:21). Francis (2002:3) argues that the parks are both one of the most compelling and the quickest platform for developing a sense of community and enhanced quality of life. Payne and Reinhard (2016:135) highlighted that the decrease in crime and delinquent behaviour in parks is a result of increased park usage. These authors added that delinquent behaviour is aggravated through a lack of natural surveillance.

#### **4.5.5 Community Parks require extensive improvement**

Willemse's (2010:77) research focused on community/neighbourhood park usage in Cape Town. One of her findings was that fear was a significant and recurring reason amongst

residents for not utilising parks, regardless of income groups. This fear manifested in fears regarding safety and problems of disorderliness, such as the presence of vagrants, drug abusers, gangsters and vandals who use the park for non-park related activities. In addition, there were fears surrounding the upkeep of the park associated with persistent litter and defacement.

#### **4.6 Summary**

The majority of the participants in this research study highlighted that parks are being used as a platform for crime and antisocial behaviour. In addition, there was a resounding response that maintenance either not being carried out by the council, or if it was, it was not performed regularly. Community members in some cases advised that they personally clean the parks, or organise cleaning operations. It was noted that the community consultation with regard to maintenance and/or the upgrading of parks, rarely occurs. The parks are not being utilised optimally, associated with crime, and do not cater for the needs of the entire community.

Chapter 5 comprises the summary, recommendations and conclusion.

## **Chapter Five: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the data analysis and findings of this research project. This chapter provides a summary of all the previous chapters within the study, makes recommendations and concludes the study. The findings, together with the proposed recommendations, are highlighted with the aim of the selected municipality optimally implementing the Community Parks Development Policy. In addition, the findings and proposed recommendations may be used for further research.

### **5.2 Realisation of the research objectives of the study**

The following research objectives were identified for the research project.

- Describe the legislative framework for parks within the selected municipality;
- Explain the role of parks
- Describe the challenges of running parks efficiently
- Describe the guidelines for the efficient running of public parks, and
- Conduct an empirical study amongst managers responsible for public parks within the selected municipality as well as representatives from selected Ratepayers Associations within the jurisdiction.

From the discussion in the previous chapter, it is clear that each of the stated research objectives were fully realised.

### **5.3 Summary of the Chapters**

#### **5.3.1 Chapter 1**

The research proposal provided insight into the meaning of recreation and the objectives of the Community Parks Development Policy. In addition, the Organisational Development and Transformation Plan (ODTP) process was explained that provided insight and background into the newly formed Recreation and Parks Department, along with the Community Services and Health Directorate. The systematic direction the study undertakes was then introduced. A brief introduction of the various chapters within the dissertation was presented, laying the foundation and providing the context to the problem statement. In order for the study to take its course however, the problem statement was highlighted. The research problem denoted that the inadequate implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy had resulted in the majority of community members not enjoying the parks as was intended by this policy.

### **5.3.2 Chapter 2**

The literature review commenced with the presentation of legislative framework governing the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy. In doing so, this chapter highlighted the Recreation and Parks Department's constitutional obligation and stipulated the various policies and strategies placed on the selected municipality in which the Community Parks Development Policy must be implemented. Furthermore, the roles of parks were discussed in relation to local, national and international literature. The benefits associated with park usage, along with the barriers preventing such advantages, were also discussed. Community participation on a broader scale was explained, with the view to making parks safer and more desirable and, thus, increasing patronage. The fact that a combination of successful park usage and positive community participation is a potential tool for building a sense of community and increasing custodianship, was also discussed.

### **5.3.3 Chapter 3**

In identifying the value and purpose of the various research methodologies and differentiating between them, the most suitable research methodology was selected. The lack of local, national and international literature on community parks prescribed that the type of research conducted should be of an exploratory nature. In order to arrive at the aforementioned conclusion, the first point of reference was the research design. The research design comprised the following main aspects:

- Identifying the research objectives,
- Designing the research data instrument,
- Selecting a sample population and
- Collecting and analysing the data from the selected sample.

The distinction of quantitative and qualitative reliability and validity was explained, stating that the qualitative approach was the more suitable research method for the study.

### **5.3.4 Chapter 4**

The purpose of this chapter was to indicate the credentials of the research participants and, in doing so, it explained their relevance to the study. The key themes identified during the interviews with the research participants were noted and endorsed by quoting directly from the transcripts of the interviews.

The emerging themes were as follows:

- The implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy;
- The process of community participation;
- Challenges in park maintenance;
- The community's utilisation of parks, and
- The improvement of Community Parks.

The major findings relating to the identified themes are as follows:

- The implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy within the selected municipality must be implemented effectively;
- Community members must be encouraged to participate in managing parks;
- Community challenges should be addressed to improve the maintenance of parks;
- Efforts should be made for Parks to be utilised optimally, and
- Community parks require extensive improvement.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

### **5.4.1 The municipality should put measures in place to improve the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy.**

The City of Cape Town municipality has created the Parks Development Policy to govern the utilisation of community parks. The empirical study showed that the implementation of the policy to serve the social recreational needs of the community leaves much to be desired since the facilities in community parks are not adequate. Furthermore, the members of the community do not use the facilities in the park because they do not feel it is safe to do so. The said policy is clear on what should be done to make parks serve as a means of community recreation.

### **5.4.2. The municipality should introduce strategies to improve community participation in policy implementation on parks.**

As emphasized by Willemse (2010:109) community participation is a critical requirement in ensuring community parks are run successfully, since the community members feel they contribute to the improvement of the environment in which they operate. This empirical study has shown that community participation according to Perry, Moodley and Bob (2008) in parks in the selected municipality generally occurs on a very small scale. The community is of the



opinion that since the municipality is making use of professionals in the Department to provide services, the implementation of these should be effective and efficient. The municipality should do more to encourage community participation in the implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy. The knowledge of professionals should be used to make appropriate recommendations to the municipality to improve the quality of community participation in the implementation of policy on parks.

#### **5.4.3. The municipality should cooperate with the community to address community challenges in the maintenance of public parks.**

Homeless people and gangs, according to Willemse (2012:226), are some of the antisocial elements that make people feel unsafe in public parks. There is a strong feeling that more effort should be made to ensure parks are well maintained. In the literature review in Chapter Two of this study it is mentioned that the involvement of “parks buddies” can make a difference to the current unsafe situation. It is also emphasized that the willingness of the community to take ownership of their facilities is an important requirement for the effective maintenance of public parks.

#### **5.4.4. The municipality should engage with the community with a view to improving the utilisation of parks by the community.**

The importance of effectively engaging the community in public projects was emphasized by Kandil (2016) who stated that the community can influence social or personal changes, as well as the consideration of diversity that Perry, Moodley and Bob may affect the level of harmony among people when participating in decision making processes. The study participants stated that the community members strongly support interventions such as the neighbourhood watch and regular workshops on community engagement, but they need a well-equipped facility to run workshops for the community. All the participants believe that the community has the potential to make a useful contribution in view of its detailed knowledge of what is happening in the community.

### **5.5. Recommendation for future research**

The recommendations above are targeted at solving the problem relating to the use of parks within the City of Cape Town metropolis. For future research, it is recommended that a model for utilisation of public parks be designed that could serve as an instrument through which the various municipalities can ensure optimum utilisation of public parks.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The research project attempts to address the phenomenon of the effective utilisation of community parks within the City of Cape Town metropolis. There is evidence that there are great challenges relating to the effective implementation of the Community Parks Development Policy, especially regarding the involvement of communities. The research objectives that were addressed relate to the legislative framework for parks, the role of parks within cities, the guidelines for efficiently managing public parks as well as the challenges of running public parks effectively. The literature review comprised consulting sources such as books, journals and the internet. The empirical study involved staff members from the selected municipality, Ratepayers Associations and Community Based Organisations. The findings were recorded and used for making recommendations for solving the research problem, as well as suggesting ideas for future research.

During the research project the researcher was confronted by a few challenges. The first challenge was the difficulty in scheduling meetings with the study participants. In addition, the demarcated areas form part of predominant Afrikaans speaking communities, in which the researcher had to translate interview questions for respondents to ensure that they fully understood the question/s and could answer appropriately. The researcher needed to constantly steer the respondents to answer the questions and not move away from the topic under discussion because some respondents regarded the interviews as an opportunity to highlight and/or discuss other community issues that did not pertain to the research project. It was both intriguing and frustrating that during the interviews with the community leaders it was apparent that community members' desires are limited in that they perceive parks as providing services for children only, not the entire community.

Despite these challenges mentioned above, this research project was indeed a rewarding experience for the researcher.

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## Annexure 1

<b>Interview Schedule for municipality officials</b>
1. What are the priority purposes for parks in residential areas in terms of the parks policy?
2. What are the main challenges regarding the implementation of the policy on parks within the City of Cape Town?
3. What can be done to address these challenges?
4. What communal activities are run by the municipality in the parks? If none, is there any consideration of implementing such activities?
5. What communal programs are run by the municipality in the parks? If none, is there any consideration of implementing such programs?
6. What is the level of community participation in the designing of parks?
7. What is the quality of this participation?
8. Are parks regularly maintained by the Council?
9. What is the level of community participation in the maintenance of parks?
10. Are there any challenges experienced regarding the maintenance of parks?
11. How often does the community use the parks?
12. What are the demographics of community members making use of the parks?
13. What safety measures are in place for parks?
14. How effective are these measures?
15. What are your suggestions for improving these measures?
16. To what extent is the community involved in these safety measures?
17. Are there any other suggestions for improving utilisation of parks?



## Annexure 2

<b>Interview Schedule for Ratepayers Associations</b>
1. How often does the community use the park?
2. What type of community members make use of the park?
3. Do residents have any expectations of parks?
4. What are residents' perceptions of community parks, and why?
5. What are residents' experiences of community parks, and why?
6. What do residents identify as the biggest challenges for successful park use?
7. What can be done to address these challenges?
8. Are there any other suggestions for improving utilisation of parks?
9. What community programs are run in the parks?
10. Does the community have any expectations for community programs to be run in the parks? Please elaborate as to the expectations?
11. What communal activities are run in the parks?
12. Does the community have any expectations for community activities to be run in the parks? Please elaborate as to the expectations?
13. What is the level of community participation in the designing of parks?
14. Are parks regularly maintained by the Council?
15. Is there any community participation in the maintenance of parks?
16. To what extent are communities consulted in view of the upgrades?
17. What safety measures are in place for parks?
18. How effective are these measures?
19. What are your suggestions to improving these measures?
20. To what extent is the community involved in these safety measures?