



SERVICE DELIVERY PARTY

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROPOSAL

Maths, Science, Technology and AI Parks

A learning park in every subcouncil, built and guarded by its community, backed by business and the SETAs

Submitted to: City of Cape Town, IDP Review

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IDP PROPOSAL

Maths, Science, Technology and AI Parks

A learning park in every subcouncil, built and guarded by its community

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Submitted to the City of Cape Town for the Integrated Development Plan review by the Service Delivery Party (Cape Town). Prepared by Farouk Cassim, October 2026. Contact: mfcassim001@gmail.com



Summary of the Proposal

The Service Delivery Party (SDP) asks the City of Cape Town to make available one suitable municipal site in each of its 20 subcouncil areas for a Maths, Science, Technology and AI Park. Each park is an open, outdoor and partly sheltered learning space where children, young people and adults meet mathematics, science, technology and artificial intelligence through play, making and doing.

The idea is not new to this city. A Maths, Science and Technology Park was proposed in a council motion moved by Farouk Cassim during his term as a City of Cape Town councillor, and the motion was adopted. The community initiative *Maths in the Park* has since shown on the ground that learners and families will come to an open space to do mathematics together. This proposal updates that adopted motion in two ways. It adds artificial intelligence, which now shapes almost every job our learners will enter. It also changes the delivery model so that the City does not carry the full cost.

The model has three partners with three distinct duties:

- **The City** provides the land, zoning, basic services connection and the lighting and access that any public park requires, through the IDP and the subcouncil system.
- **The community and NGOs** carry responsibility for creating, maintaining and safeguarding the infrastructure through a constituted Park Trust in each subcouncil.
- **Companies and SETAs** hold a formal stake in each park, funding equipment, programmes and tutors through skills development budgets, sectoral grants and corporate social investment, in return for recognised skills outcomes and a pipeline of future talent.

A park that teaches is a park that is used. A park that is used is a park that is safe.

PART ONE

The Case and the Constitution

01 The Constitutional Anchor

Sections 152 and 153 are binding duties with measurable standards

Section 152(1) of the Constitution sets the objects of local government. Three of them apply directly to this proposal. A municipality must ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner (Section 152(1)(b)), promote social and economic development (Section 152(1)(c)) and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government (Section 152(1)(e)). Section 152(2) requires the City to strive, within its financial and administrative capacity, to achieve these objects.



Section 153(a) goes further. It requires a municipality to structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community. The Integrated Development Plan is the instrument through which the City does this. A proposal that turns idle municipal land into a source of skills, employment readiness and safer public space falls squarely within Section 153(a).

The City does not run schools. Education is a national and provincial competence. Municipal parks and recreation and local amenities, however, are municipal functions under Part B of Schedule 5 of the Constitution. A learning park is first a park. The City therefore acts within its own mandate when it provides the site, and the learning programme is delivered by the partners who carry that expertise.

02 The Evidence of Need

Our learners are falling behind early, and the gap widens outside the classroom

In the 2023 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), South Africa's Grade 5 learners scored 362 in mathematics and 308 in science, both declines from 2019. Assessed against Grade 4 learners from 59 countries, they ranked last in both subjects. Grade 9 mathematics improved slightly, from 389 in 2019 to 397 in 2023, while Grade 9 science fell from 370 to 362.

The Western Cape achieved the top provincial scores in the country in Grade 5 and Grade 9 mathematics and science. That is welcome, yet it hides the gap within the metro. A child in Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain or the wider Cape Flats seldom has a science centre, a makers' space or a computer lab within walking distance. The schools in these areas carry large classes and few laboratories. Learning that happens after school, at weekends and in the holidays is where advantaged children pull ahead. A park on the doorstep closes that gap at the lowest possible cost.

The City cannot fix the classroom. It can fix the hours and the spaces outside it.

03 Why AI Belongs in the Park Now

Artificial intelligence is the new literacy of the workplace

When the original motion was adopted, the focus was mathematics, science and technology. Since then, artificial intelligence has moved from research laboratories into banking, retail, call centres, logistics, health care and government. Cape Town's own business process outsourcing sector, which employs large numbers of young people from the Cape Flats, is being reshaped by it. Young people who understand how AI tools work, where they fail and how to use them responsibly will compete for the jobs that remain and the new ones being created. Young people who do not will be left behind. The AI component of each park teaches exactly this, with mathematics as its foundation.



PART TWO

Lessons from Elsewhere

Cities and countries across the world have already tested parts of this idea. The SDP has studied eight of them. Each offers a specific lesson for how Cape Town should design, govern and fund its parks.

01 Philadelphia: Urban Thinkscape

Turning an empty lot and a bus stop into a place of learning

In the Belmont neighbourhood of West Philadelphia, a previously empty lot beside a bus stop was turned into a playful learning site. Benches carry puzzles with movable parts that build spatial skills and invite talk about numbers, shapes and colours. The community chose and helped secure the site, and hundreds of residents helped build the installations. Researchers found that interaction between caregivers and children rose by 24 percent after installation, and families talked more about STEM there than at a comparable local playground. Residents also gained construction skills, and local people were trained and hired to collect data.

Lesson for Cape Town: learning can be built into ordinary public space at low cost, and the community must choose the site and help build it.

02 Giessen, Germany: The Mathematikum

Mathematics experienced with the hands, not memorised from the board

The Mathematikum, opened in 2002 by the mathematician Albrecht Beutelspacher, is described as the world's first hands-on mathematics museum. Its exhibits avoid formulae and symbols. Visitors build a bridge from wooden slats without nails, stand inside a giant soap bubble or crack codes. The museum has drawn more than 2.5 million visitors, and a Mini-Mathematikum serves children from four to eight. Its travelling exhibitions have been hosted by schools, museums and other institutions around the world.

Lesson for Cape Town: durable, hands-on maths exhibits can be designed once and replicated across 20 parks, and young children need their own zone.

03 Barcelona: The Ateneus de Fabricació

A public network of makers' labs spread across city districts

Barcelona City Council runs a network of five public fabrication laboratories in different districts, including working class Ciutat Meridiana. They promote digital literacy and social innovation, giving citizens, schools, businesses and associations access to 3D printers, electronics and digital manufacturing tools. The service is free, and its model rests on use rather than ownership. Each lab carries a specialism, such as sustainability or textiles, so that the network is more than the sum of its parts.



Lesson for Cape Town: a district-by-district network works, and each subcouncil park can take a specialism suited to its local economy.

04 Medellín, Colombia: The Library Parks

Putting the best public buildings in the poorest neighbourhoods

From 2004, Medellín built a series of library parks in its most marginalised hillside neighbourhoods, combining libraries, classrooms, internet access and public open space. Each was planned with residents and paired with wider social programmes. A study of the Biblioteca España found that residents of the comunas it serves perceived their situation to be improving faster than the city as a whole, and the improvement coincided with its opening.

Lesson for Cape Town: locate the first parks where need is greatest, in the Metro South-East, and treat them as civic landmarks rather than afterthoughts.

05 India: The Agastya International Foundation

Low-cost, hands-on science at enormous scale

Founded in 1999, the Agastya International Foundation runs one of the world's largest hands-on science programmes for disadvantaged children and teachers. It works through science centres that serve as resource hubs for surrounding schools, fleets of mobile science laboratories and labs carried on motorbikes where vans cannot reach. Its models are built from cheap, everyday materials, and its growth has relied on government partnerships and corporate donors.

Lesson for Cape Town: each park should be a hub for the schools around it, with a mobile unit taking kits into schools and informal settlements that cannot reach the park.

06 Singapore: AI for Everyone

Free AI literacy for ordinary citizens, delivered with industry

In 2018 AI Singapore, with the national Infocomm Media Development Authority, launched AI for Everyone, a free short programme aimed at reaching 10,000 people from secondary school learners to working adults. Microsoft and Intel supplied materials, and community organisations helped to reach participants. A companion programme, AI for Industry, trained professionals more deeply.

Lesson for Cape Town: short, free and certified AI literacy courses can be run in community spaces, and technology companies will co-fund them when the outcomes are clear.



07 Kigali, Rwanda: kLab

An African technology hub built by a partnership

kLab opened in 2012 as Kigali's first open technology hub, providing free workspace for students, graduates and young entrepreneurs. It was set up through the ICT Chamber, the Rwanda Development Board, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the private sector and Carnegie Mellon University Rwanda. Observers noted early on that a government can build a space overnight, yet a community has to be cultivated over time.

Lesson for Cape Town: an African city can build this with partners, and the community and mentors matter more than the building.

08 United Kingdom: Friends of Parks and Community Stewardship

Residents as the eyes, ears and hands of their park

Thousands of Friends of Parks groups in England and Wales care for local parks in partnership with their councils. They raise funds, run events, report faults and maintain agreed areas. In Thurrock, the Friends of Hardie Park developed a community stewardship model run as a social enterprise, supported by volunteers and local businesses that receive recognition in return. The group identified the essentials: a solid relationship with the council, a properly constituted organisation able to trade, and volunteers who are recruited and celebrated. Research also warns that such groups can drift into a narrow role if they are not supported.

Lesson for Cape Town: community custodianship works when it is constituted, written into an agreement with the City and allowed to earn modest income.

PART THREE

The Proposal

01 One Park in Every Subcouncil

Twenty sites, chosen with communities, on land the City already owns

The City has 20 subcouncils, each made up of between four and seven neighbouring wards. The SDP proposes one park per subcouncil, so that every resident of Cape Town lives within reach of one. Each subcouncil, working with ward councillors and ward committees, identifies a suitable site from municipal land: an underused park, a vacant public open space, land beside a community hall, library or transport interchange or a site next to a cluster of schools. Sites should be on safe walking routes and near public transport.

The City retains ownership of the land. The site is made available to the Park Trust under a renewable use agreement for an initial period of ten years, with clear standards attached.



02 What a Park Contains

Four zones that grow with the learner

Zone	What it offers
Maths Trail and Play Zone	Outdoor number lines, hopscotch grids, shape and pattern walls, giant measuring and estimating stations, puzzle benches and a small-children's area. Built in concrete, steel and paint so that it lasts and is hard to vandalise.
Science Garden	A weather station, rain gauges, a sundial, a water and energy demonstration, a food garden for biology and soil science and solar panels that also power the site.
Makers' Container	A converted, secured shipping container with tools, electronics kits, a 3D printer and a robotics bench, opened under supervision by trained tutors.
AI and Coding Pod	A second secured container with solar-powered laptops and connectivity for coding, data skills and AI literacy courses for learners, job seekers and adults, with certified short courses.

Each park takes a specialism suited to its area, as Barcelona's labs do. A park near the harbour might specialise in marine science, one near an industrial node in manufacturing and robotics, one beside the airport in logistics and data.

03 Three Partners, Three Duties

The City provides the place, the community owns the park, industry invests in the people

Partner	Responsibility	What it gains
City of Cape Town	Identifies and releases sites; zoning and land use approvals; electricity and water connection; perimeter fencing, lighting and access in line with any public park; inclusion in the IDP and subcouncil plans; a single liaison officer per subcouncil.	Delivery on Sections 152 and 153 at low cost; safer, active public space
Community and NGOs	Form a constituted Park Trust (NPC) per subcouncil; build, maintain and safeguard the infrastructure; recruit volunteers and tutors; run the daily programme; account publicly for use and spending.	Ownership, jobs for local tutors and caretakers, a civic home for learning



Partner	Responsibility	What it gains
Companies	Hold a stake through a seat on the Park Trust; fund equipment and containers; provide mentors and volunteer engineers; offer internships and work experience to park graduates.	Skills development and socio-economic development points, a talent pipeline, local recognition
SETAs	Fund accredited skills programmes, tutor training and work readiness courses run at the parks; recognise park courses toward qualifications.	Measurable delivery on sector skills plans in the communities that need them most

04 How Companies and SETAs Take Their Stake

Using money that already exists for skills, directed where it matters

Employers with an annual payroll above R500,000 pay a Skills Development Levy of 1 percent of payroll. Eighty percent of the levy goes to the SETAs and twenty percent to the National Skills Fund. A large share of what reaches the SETAs is set aside for discretionary or sectoral grants, which fund skills programmes, work readiness courses and workplace learning in scarce and critical skills. The money is already being collected. What is missing is a credible, community-based place to spend part of it in the townships of the Cape Flats.

The SDP proposes that the City convene the most relevant SETAs, including the MICT SETA (information technology and communications), the ETDP SETA (education and training) and the merSETA (manufacturing and engineering), together with the National Skills Fund, to sign a single framework agreement for the network. Companies would join through the same framework, so that each park has at least one anchor company and one SETA partner. Corporate contributions to accredited programmes count toward skills development on the B-BBEE scorecard, which gives business a direct reason to take part.

05 Governance and Safeguarding

A community that builds the park is a community that protects it

Each Park Trust is a non-profit company with a board drawn from local residents, schools, community organisations, the anchor company and a SETA representative, with the ward councillor as an ex officio member. It signs a Park Compact with the City setting out duties, opening hours, safety standards and reporting. The Trust appoints a park manager and caretakers from the community, ideally young people trained through the park itself.

- Equipment is stored in locked, alarmed containers that are opened only during supervised hours.
- Outdoor installations are built from robust materials with no removable parts of resale value.
- Every adult working with children is vetted and trained in line with the SDP's Cape Town Child Safeguarding Standard.



- Neighbourhood watches, Law Enforcement and the City's CCTV network include the park in their patrols and coverage.
- Activity is the best protection. A park in use from early morning to evening is far harder to vandalise than an empty one.

PART FOUR

Delivery Standards and Phasing

The SDP holds that Sections 152 and 153 carry measurable delivery standards. This proposal therefore comes with standards against which the City, the Park Trusts and the public can measure progress. Each Park Trust reports quarterly to its subcouncil, and the City publishes an annual network report.

Standard	Target
Coverage	One park in each of the 20 subcouncils by the end of the IDP term, with the first in the Metro South-East
Access	Open at least six days a week, including school holidays, with free entry for all
Participation	At least 10,000 learner visits per park per year once fully operational, recorded by the Trust
Skills	At least 300 certified short courses in coding, data or AI literacy completed per park per year
Employment	At least ten local people employed per park as tutors, caretakers and managers
Pathways	At least 50 park participants per park per year placed in internships, learnerships or further study
Upkeep	Infrastructure maintained to the standard set in the Park Compact, verified by an annual City inspection

01 Phase One: Pilot Parks (2027/28)

Prove the model where need is greatest

Three pilot parks in the Metro South-East, in the subcouncils serving Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain and the wider Cape Flats, building on the work of *Maths in the Park*. Sites are released, Park Trusts constituted, the SETA and company framework signed and the first Maths Trails and AI Pods opened. An independent evaluation, modelled on the Philadelphia studies, measures use and learning from the start.



02 Phase Two: Expansion (2028/29 to 2029/30)

Extend to ten subcouncils and build the network

Seven further parks open, with a shared exhibit design library so that proven installations are replicated rather than reinvented. A mobile science and AI unit begins visiting schools and informal settlements beyond walking distance of a park.

03 Phase Three: Full Network (2030/31 to 2031/32)

Every subcouncil served

The remaining ten parks open, each with a local specialism. An annual inter-park Maths, Science and AI Festival brings the network together, linked to the SDP's wider proposals for youth employment and skills.

PART FIVE

What We Ask the City to Adopt

The SDP requests that the City of Cape Town include the following in its Integrated Development Plan and the related budget and subcouncil plans:

- **Adopt** the Maths, Science, Technology and AI Parks programme as an IDP project under the City's social and economic development objectives, giving effect to Sections 152(1)(b), (c) and (e) and Section 153(a) of the Constitution.
- **Instruct** each subcouncil to identify and recommend one suitable municipal site within six months, through its ward committees and in consultation with residents.
- **Approve** a standard Park Compact and a ten-year renewable use agreement for constituted community Park Trusts.
- **Budget** for site preparation, services connection, fencing and lighting through the capital budget, supported by ward allocations and multi-ward projects where wards choose to contribute.
- **Convene** the relevant SETAs, the National Skills Fund and anchor companies to sign a single framework agreement for funding programmes and tutors across the network.
- **Revive and give effect** to the earlier council resolution on a Maths, Science and Technology Park, now extended to include artificial intelligence.
- **Report** publicly each year against the delivery standards set out in Part Four.



CONCLUSION

From Motion to Movement

Cape Town already has the land, the young people and a council resolution in favour of this idea. Industry already pays a skills levy that is meant to build exactly these capabilities. Communities across the Cape Flats have already shown, through *Maths in the Park*, that they will turn up to learn when given the space. What has been missing is a City willing to provide the place and a model that shares the responsibility.

This proposal supplies that model. The City provides the site. The community builds, keeps and guards the park. Companies and SETAs invest in the people who use it. In return, every subcouncil gains a safe, busy public space where a child can first discover that she is good at mathematics, and where a young adult can learn the skills that will get him his first job. That is service delivery matched to the constitutional promise of Sections 152 and 153.

Give every subcouncil a park where the future is learned in the open.

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