Skateboarders sometimes have the unfortunate and misguided reputation of being rebellious ‘anarchists’ with no regard for law and order, and often this is due to their use of public space. The lack of dedicated spaces for them to practice their sport forces them to use shared open space which often clash with other users. There are a few venues in the City that allow skateboarders and there were, until very recently, also no big public skate parks in or around Cape Town.

Cape Town
Gardens Skatepark

Informal skate spots in Central Cape Town

Formal Skate parks in the greater Cape Town area

Bid Book - World Design Capital 2014
Gardens is a residential neighbourhood of Cape Town situated south of the Central Business District and at the foot of Table Mountain. The site is under the bridge where Jutland Avenue, one of the provincial main roads and Maynard road meets. The Vacant Area below the Jutland Avenue Bridge has been an eyesore and problem for quite a few years now. The main problem with this dead space is that it became a place for antisocial behaviour especially by vagrants, illegal dumping, fires, public defecating and loitering are some of the commonplace challenges to deal with on the site. The site is zoned as road reserve, it has an asphalt surface with terraces on two roadway sides where Celtis Sinensis (Chinese Hackberry) trees are planted. The low retaining walls made it possible to have a relatively level surface in the centre.

An initiative to transform this vacant public space into something that will benefit the community and solve some of the issues has been undertaken and that resulted in the current project. The hope is that this project will set precedent for the use of many of the vacant spaces below City of Cape Town Bridges and off-ramps.

**USER PERCEPTION SURVEY**

**do you think there is a need for a skate park in the area?**

- **NO** 25%
- **YES** 75%

**do you think the noise would be a problem to local residents?**

- **NO**
- **MAYBE**
- **YES**

- 0-21 years
- 22-40 years
- 41+ years
- non responsive

**what should be the park’s operating times?**

- **7am** - 7pm
- 25%
- 7am
- 16%
The City of Cape Town has recognised skateboarding as a viable mode of transport and transforming the space into a Skate Park will be a good use of vacant land, it will solve the vagrant problem and compliment the adjacent public transport system.

Cape Town has recently upgraded its public transport system and consequently built a bus station right opposite our site, greatly increasing the accessibility of the site. Skateboarding is a minority sport that doesn't have any dedicated facilities in Cape Town and to link this with the Public transport service will give skateboarders all over the metropolitan area easy access to the first Central City Skate Park. The fact that the site is covered will ensure that the skate park can be used throughout the year and bad weather and rain won't have a major impact on its use.

The location is also very suitable to a potentially noisy activity such as skateboarding; the site is bound by roads on three sides with Public Open Space on two sides and a Bus Stop on the other the noise of motor vehicles will drown out most of the resultant noise.

The Design accommodates for beginner and professional users, with various obstacles that add to the interest but also has multiple uses which will give the professional user more variety. The concept caters for spectator areas on the sides where less experienced users can watch and learn, skills transfer is an important consideration in the design. The flow of the skate park accommodates the natural ground level and utilizes the retaining wall to create a natural flow from two high points with a pipe jam, manual pads, air wedges and various other obstacles in the free flowing area.

The skate park is to be a public facility which is fenced for access control but also to protect cars from skate boards that might fly out of the park. The materials used will be concrete and steel for edges, rails and other hard wearing sides. This will ensure the maintenance responsibility is minimal and reduced to a weekly sweep and monthly hose down. The use of high strength concrete and steel does impact on the affordability of the project but the capital investment will offset the minimal long term cost for maintenance. The park is able to cater for all small wheel sports and the durable materials will ensure no or minimal wearing during use.

A User perception survey was undertaken to gather public opinion on relevant issue regarding the specific site and also the management thereof. Residents living adjacent to the site and passers-by were canvassed and the results was heavy in favour of a skate park, for more information see the second panel.

This project illustrates how innovative thinking and design development can transform vacant problematic spaces for the benefit of a wider community whilst it promotes minority sports like skateboarding, rollerblading and BMX.
The design of the first Central City Skate Park is now underway and will be conveniently located next to the Mill Street MyCiti bus trunkstop. As this skate park will be the first in the CBD area, it is predicted that it be well-used by skateboarders travelling to the area from all over the metropolitan area. This will also put Cape Town on the map as a City that’s “friendly” to skateboarders – a mode of transport that is also now recognised by the City as a viable new mobility transport option.