

6. CONCLUSIONS

Humans have evolved a means to filter and reinforce certain stimuli in order to choose food. In the past this helped us, but now, with a globalised world and refined foods, we need to be diligent in our creation of outdoor eating spaces. We should design environments that aid healthier food decisions.

The proposal takes the form of an in situ, phased and supportive environmental upgrade; giving the necessary infrastructural facilities, guiding examples and institutional support so as to allow Alaskans a better chance at making healthier food choices. It is comprised of:

- An infrastructural upgrade of one of Alaska's main walkways dealing with erosion and ease of access.
- The use of behavioural tools along the route and at nodes to aid healthier eating decisions.
- A mentorship programme at the Demonstration Kitchen aiding food cultivation, preparation and presentation skills.
- A Play Park with social amenities.
- A refreshed Store Area with attraction to Alaskans.
- A recycling initiative aimed at giving monetary incentives to keep the primary walkway clean thus making the behavioural tools more effective.
- An ancillary water supply intended to irrigate the entire primary street and subsistence agriculture belt.

All the above is done in a way that makes it easy to appropriate and scale out to the rest of Alaska with sustainable means of construction and management.

Food is such a complex, intrinsic and pervasive part of our lives that to effect any real change one would need to alter as much of the user's environment as possible. This change would come in the physical built environment and just as importantly in social norm changes which are the hardest to affect. Implementing an outdoor eating street which uses behavioural techniques requires institutional action, such as food mentorship as proposed in the Demonstration Kitchen, to increase the success of the project. As we have seen,

many of our habits are embedded in our culture and built environment which means that large social shifts in our landscape needed to alter these habits.

To change people's behaviour one must give them the opportunity to do so. Giving Alaskan's the chance to eat better is the strongest tool to use. This is what the OET behavioural tools allow for: a break from the low-income consumerist norms and a reminder of what is healthy and uplifting.

Good design practice that is inclusive, enabling, resilient and accessible through dissemination is still the vehicle for the behavioural tools. Design is still just as important as it ever was. Only, now it is getting help in the form of behavioural science. When we design our envisaged places and we take into account not only the obvious relationship users have with place but understand the core behavioural principles, we can design with any goal or aim in mind. Understanding people lets one design for them.

You are designing for people; you need to be well versed in the abilities and frailties of the human mind. There are fundamental truths of what we are capable [of] that runs deeper than culture and language.

~ Raskin 2011:para.9

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The answer to the research question ‘can a designed, eating oriented landscape change peoples’ dietary habits’ is a qualified ‘Yes’, but the efficacy is yet to be determined. To do this a simulation of the intervention will have to be attempted, but based on the research cited and the dynamic nature of Alaska it will be a very subjective attempt. This highlights the need for design research to take place in one-to-one scale testing and experiential learning (Roncken *et al* 2012:68).

The issue of community participation in design should be addressed. The project’s solution is based on academic research, much of which is derived from the local context of Tshwane and some even in Mamelodi, yet this desktop study approach negatively impacts the chances of discovering the community’s hierarchy of needs. One could claim that the intervention’s ownership still sits with the landscape architect and institutes running the mentorship programmes when it should wholly be of the community.

The lack of writing on the effects landscape architecture has on eating behaviour shows that there is still a lot that needs to be researched and explored, such as:

- Utilising opportunities similar to the intensive and thorough data gathering accomplished by the COPC’s system to substantiate the efficacy of landscape elements in eating behaviour change.

- How causal reasoning can be used to solve complex landscape design issues: first principles based design that starts at neural and biological level.

8. APPENDICES

1: Real-time Foods research group research plan proposal April 2014. Please note CoE Collaborating Institutes.



DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security Research Plan

Proposal to NRF April 2014

Director: Prof Julian May

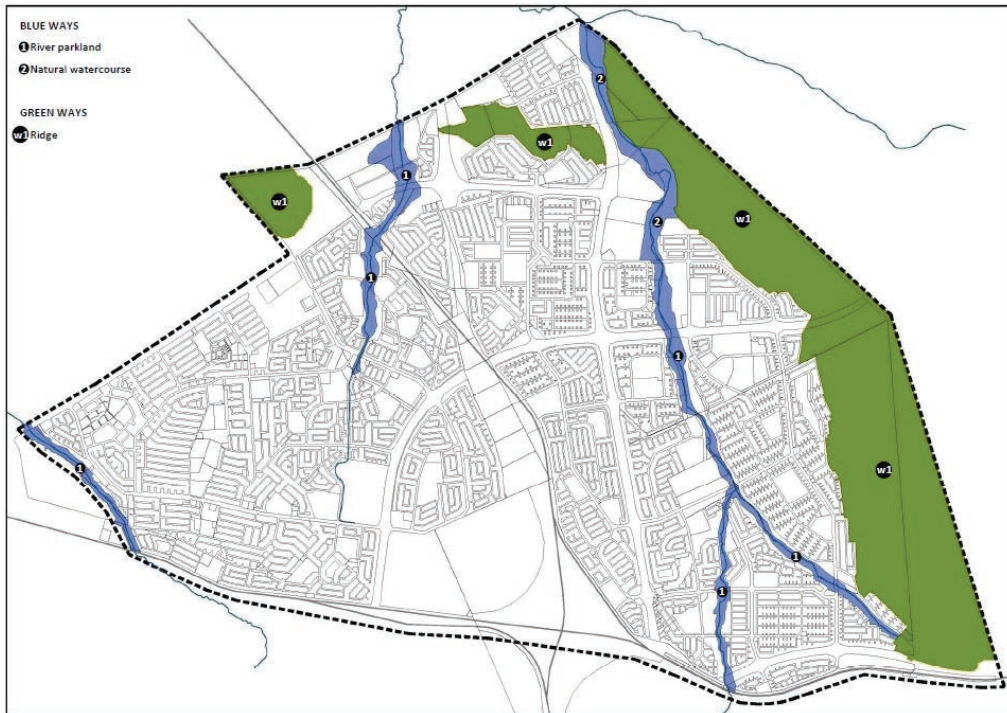
CoE Co-Director: Prof Sheryl Hendriks

CoE Collaborating Institutions: Universities of Cape Town, Fort Hare, Johannesburg, Limpopo, Nelson Mandela, North West, Stellenbosch, and Venda, Tshwane University of Technology, the Agricultural Research Council, Water Research Council and international partners, Australian National University, City University of New York, International Food Policy Research Institute, Michigan State University and Missouri University

2: MAMELODI EAST - URBAN HUB DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

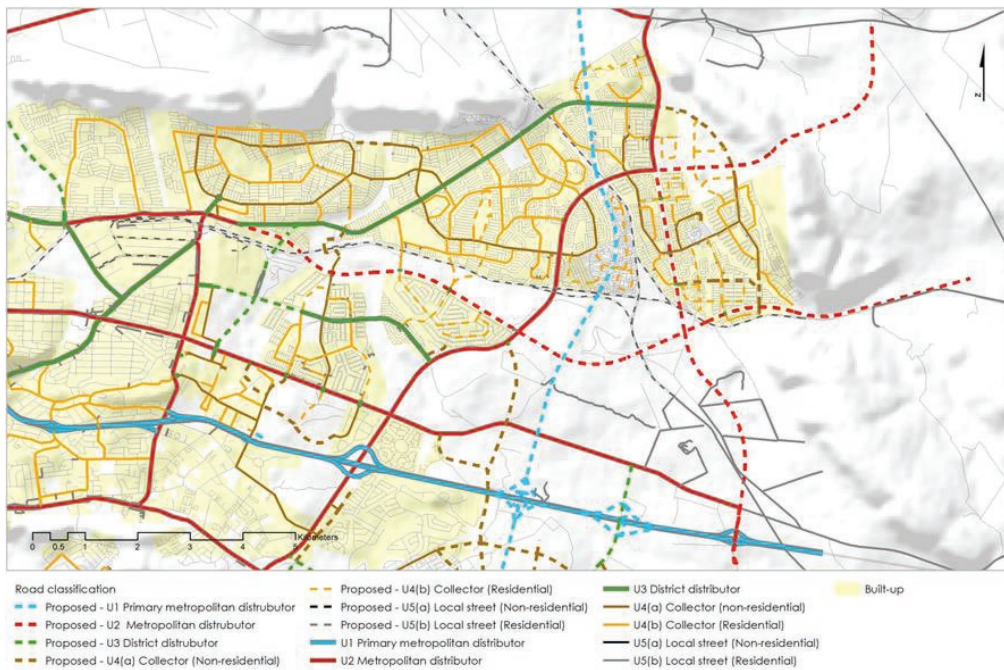
Page 16, Figure 8.1: Mamelodi East Green and Blue Ways does not recognise Alaska.

Figure 8.1: Mamelodi East Green and Blue Ways



Page 22, Figure 10: Road Network illustrates the primary routes in Alaska as existing.

Figure 10: Road Network – CoT Current Planning



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