Improving a Shack Settlement:
Enhancing Quality of Life for Litha Park
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Executive Summary

Litha Park is an informal settlement community of over 1,400 people in the Khayelitsha section of Cape Town, South Africa. Residents live in shacks made out of collected materials and have no legal right to the land.

Through the month of June, 2014, our team of University of Maryland Community Planning students visited Litha Park to help understand and find solutions to their most pressing problems. Litha Park residents identified the high crime rate, fire damage, a lack of sufficient community space, and high unemployment as the most important issues.

Many of the problems can be traced to the chaotic and unplanned layout of the settlement. Narrow, winding, and unlit paths create opportunity for criminals to rob and assault the residents. The tight corridors make it easy for fires to spread from shack to shack, and severely limit access to fire department emergency services. Uncontrolled shack encroachment has left very little general community space available within the community.

While fully addressing these structural problems would require an intensive overhaul of the layout of Litha Park, there are smaller incremental solutions that the community can pursue on their own in the short-term. The residents can use readily available materials to block unnecessary gaps between the shacks, removing potential attack points for criminals. Vacated shacks should be used to create new community space or expand pathways. Investments should be made into the community, including outdoor lighting, Khusella alarms for fire warning, and fire extinguishers or hoses for putting out fires.

Much progress can also be made through better organization. A community association with a community savings fund should be created to pay for needed investments. Outside financial contributions can be sought from charities and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) to supplement this fund. Organized crime watches can deter criminals, and better emergency planning can facilitate a more efficient firefighting process. Employment can be expanded by banding skilled workers into more effective cooperatives.

Litha Park should also consider more substantial long-term solutions. The City of Cape Town is enacting a policy of ‘re-blocking’, which offers major upgrading opportunities to informal settlements. This process incorporates new government infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer) into a reorganized shack layout planned and designed by the community. Re-blocking requires a high level of effort and patience, but can address all of the physical components of Litha Parks problems in one plan.

There are many options available for quality of life improvements in Litha Park. The residents should work with outside NGO’s, such as SDI and CORC, to determine the best plan forward in bettering their community.
Introduction

As a part of the University of Maryland Master of Community Planning Program, Professor Sidney Brower led our team on a study abroad studio to Cape Town, South Africa. The studio was intended for us to comprehensively apply the planning skills accumulated in the program to the study and assistance of a real community. Throughout the month of June, 2014, we resided in Cape Town to study quality of life issues found in the local informal settlements.

In preparation for the studio, Professor Brower contacted staff members of Shack/ Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and its associated organization, the Community Organization Resource Center (CORC), both of them non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with residents of informal settlements in Cape Town. They agreed that they would work with us on a project in Khayelitsha. The exact nature of the project would be decided by the residents themselves.

When we arrived in Cape Town, SDI / CORC introduced us to leaders of multiple communities in Khayelitsha. Through mutual interest, we were assigned by SDI / CORC to work specifically with the Litha Park community. We gathered information about Litha Park through site tours, meetings with community leaders, and focus group discussions. CORC acted as our chaperone and provided Xhosa/ English translation at all meetings with Litha Park. They informed us and advised us as our work proceeded. We could not have done the studio without the advice and coordination of the CORC staff.

Through the meetings and focus groups with Litha Park, we were able to facilitate meaningful discussion and examination of the problems facing Litha Park. This report compiles an understanding of their main problems, and recommends a range of solutions that the community can employ to improve their quality of life.

For a detailed account of the planning process and timeline, see Appendix A.
Background

- What is an Informal Settlement?
- Informal Settlements in Cape Town
- Khayelitsha and Litha Park
What is an Informal Settlement?

An informal settlement is an area of self-constructed housing that is built on land that does not legally belong to the residents. There is a lack of a planning process in the construction of these communities, which leads to a disorganized and often very dense use of land. They are found in developing countries all around the world, primarily where rapid urbanization creates unmet housing demand for the poor. When development supply is restricted by economic and government hurdles, many are left with no choice but to live in informal areas. There are different names given to these settlements depending where they are, including slum, favela, squatter settlement, and shanty town.¹

When dealing with informal settlements, different governments have different attitudes, policies, and actions. Some have demolished these areas, some work with non-government organizations (NGOs) to improve the communities, and others attempt to relocate informal settlement dwellers elsewhere.

A number of NGOs operate in informal settlements. They are generally dedicated to helping residents become politically savvy and to making their housing environment more livable. Typically, the NGOs raise money from local, provincial, national and international agencies and institutions. They offer programs in community organization, education, recreation, child care, and skill training, and they help residents advocate for better facilities and services. They bring together representatives of informal settlements in other cities and other countries to identify common problems and discuss successful programs and strategies.²

Informal Settlements in Cape Town

In South Africa, black and colored people are classified as separate racial groups. Those classified as colored include people of mixed black-white background as well as people of East Asian descent (Cape Malays). Those classified as black are members of indigenous African tribes such as Xhosa, Zulu, and Sothu. They are traditionally rural people. Until the 1980's, the number of blacks in Cape Town was relatively small because Pass Laws restricted their movement from the rural areas into the cities.³  Those who came to Cape Town lived in segregated townships such as Langa, Nyanga, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha.⁴

With the end of Apartheid, restrictions on movement were lifted on rural blacks. In search of work, many blacks moved to the cities in great numbers. Most of those who moved to Cape Town came from the Eastern Cape, the tribal home of the Xhosa people. The new government introduced ambitious housing programs, but the supply of houses could not nearly keep up with the population influx. As a result, migrants squatted on land in and adjacent to the formal townships on which they constructed shacks mostly out of recycled and rejected material. Many had difficulty finding work and remained unemployed or underemployment. Living conditions were very poor.⁵

When the government acknowledged that informal settlements were not going away, they began to provide them with electricity, shared taps, and shared toilets. This represented a new approach of in-place improvements to existing settlements, a shift away from previous methods of eviction and relocation to newly constructed housing.⁶ In 2013, the City of Cape Town adopted an official policy of proactive re-blocking. If the government determines a settlement to be in an acceptable location, then re-blocking may be used to improve basic infrastructure and living areas. The city government, along with community members and NGOs, work together to layout and reorganize shacks so that they can add additional services such as roads, taps and toilets. Generally, improvements are for infrastructure only, and do not provide formal housing in place of the shacks. While the practice has been successful in improving living conditions, the re-blocked settlements are still viewed as a temporary homes for the residents as they wait for formal housing availability from the government.⁷
Khayelitsha is located about 35 km from the Cape Town’s central business district. It was created in 1983 as a black area for 60,000 people. Since the end of Apartheid, the area has seen a large influx of rural immigrants, which have filled in the original settlement with shack communities. Today, Khayelitsha is divided into a number of sites, each divided into sections. One of the sections in site B is known as UT (See Figure 1.7). It contains two communities, Garden and Litha Park, that are separated by an elementary school. Litha Park was created in the late 1980’s, and has since grown to 400 shacks and over 1,400 residents.

Residents of Litha Park are primarily Xhosa people from the Eastern Cape. Xhosa is the primary language, with few speaking and understanding English. They live in shack dwellings made of corrugated metal, wood and other scraps and are constructed on flat, sandy soil. The shacks are freestanding and tightly packed together, creating a maze of informal dirt paths between them. The combination of compact settlement and the absence of surface water drainage create flooding issues with just moderate rains.
**Transportation**
Litha Park is bordered by two formal paved roadways, Tandazo Drive and Cwayi Crest, which share a border with formal single-family housing. Tandazo Drive is the main access to other UT neighborhoods and has mini-taxi service. A path to the east provides walking access to the train station which has service to the center of Cape Town. Schools are located within very close walking distance.

There are a few main travel paths (3-4 meters wide) through the community used mostly by pedestrians, although a small minority use them to bring their cars into personal parking spaces. Narrower paths (up to 2 meters) serve as secondary access to individual shacks.

**Amenities**
There are 46 flush toilets located on various edges of the community. With 1,400 people in the community, about 30 people need to share each flush toilet. The toilets are padlocked so that only designated residents have access to each toilet. There are 10 working water taps in the community, which are also located along the border. There are 5 broken taps that are unusable to the community located mostly along the southern boundary. No streetlights are provided within or adjacent to Litha Park. There are some large floodlights in neighboring communities, but the light is not strong enough to properly illuminate Litha Park at night.

There is a church in the center of the community, which also serves as a community gathering space with permission from the church leadership. There are some shops on the edge of community, and two pubs within the community for gathering and leisure space. There is a school owned football field on the northern border of Litha Park, which provides structured football play for the greater area. Additional public amenities include an open space area with a BBQ pit in the southeast corner and a wetland marsh, both of which are shared with neighboring communities.

See Figure 1.8, on page 1-5, for a map of the Litha Park community.
Problems in Litha Park

- Crime
- Fire Hazards
- Lack of Community Space
- Unemployment
Community Problems

Community leader discussions revealed the most pressing community issues. Persistent problems with criminal activity and fires threaten general safety. There is a lack of safe community space for adults to gather and children to play. Unemployment remains rampant, leaving many adults without activity and income generating opportunity.

Crime

Crime was the first and most pressing problem brought to our attention. The most common crimes to occur in the community are muggings, burglaries and rape. The primary motive for crime seems to be monetary gain. Criminals will mug individuals for the money they have on them, or will steal belongings from a shack and resell them. It is difficult to tell how frequently crimes take place in Litha Park due to the lack of crime reports and record keeping. Statistics for Khayelitsha as a whole does show that the broader area ranks among the worst for crime in the Western Cape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Crime</th>
<th>Number Reported Incidents</th>
<th>Ranking (In Western Cape)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Crimes</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted Murder</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault with Intent of Bodily Harm</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Assaul</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery with Aggravating Circumstances</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery at Non-residential Premises</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery at Residential Premises</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culpable Homicide</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Crime Stats South Africa

Who and When

Crime appears to target all demographics within the community. Children are mugged for their lunches or lunch money on the way to school; adults are mugged for cash on their way to or from work. Women experience muggings, but also face the additional burden of rape. Crimes do happen during the daytime, but they are more frequent at night.

Where

There are specific areas deemed “dangerous” and frequently avoided in and around Litha Park. One such locale is the park located in the southeast corner of Litha Park by the borders of TT, YB and Y (see coordinate A5 to A6 on page 1-5). This park was built by the City of Cape Town as an amenity shared by the four adjacent communities. Currently there are a few toilets, and a BBQ area. The area is known as a breeding ground for thieves. Many children reported being mugged on their way to school through this area. Adults are cornered by groups of muggers while passing through the fenced path on the way to the train station. While Litha Park residents would prefer to avoid this area, many must use it as a transit way.

Gang Activity

Litha Park did not report any issues with gang activity. This was somewhat of an anomaly, as gang activity is a common problem for many informal settlements in the Western Cape. During our visit with the Europe community, another informal settlement in Cape Town, gangs were listed as the largest issue. Litha Park, however, consistently stated that they don’t have a problem with gang activity.
The corridor along Tandazo Road (A1-D1 on page 1-5) is blamed as the origin point of many crimes. While the street itself is kept relatively safe due to its high activity and visibility, criminals often use it as their base point. Criminals often wait on the opposite side of Tandazo and target Litha Park residents as they are dropped off from work. They will follow the victims into a more isolated space in the interior of the community, mug them, and then flee. Residents are also targeted while using the communal toilets, particularly along Tandazo Road. While some of the stalls face the community, many face outwards towards the main road. Criminals watch for residents entering these toilet stalls from Tandazo, then abuse their vulnerable position to rape the female occupants or mug the men.

Muggers also loiter near Litha Park’s pubs to target patrons as they leave for home at night. Inebriated patrons are much less aware of their surroundings and have a more difficult time defending themselves. As they walk home into the dark pathways, they become very vulnerable to being followed and attacked for their possessions.

**What Causes Crime?**

**Chaotic Layout**

The layout of the neighborhood is conducive to crime. There are very few straight corridors with clear visibility. Shacks are randomly arranged with no pattern or grid, creating endless blind angles and dark corners. It is easy for perpetrators to hide in the small, unlit spaces between houses and surprise their victims. The unorganized layout creates many hidden pathways in and out of the community, allowing criminals to easily flee out of sight after committing a crime.

**Lack of Lighting**

While Litha Park does have electricity, there are no street lights. The football field to the north does have floodlights, but these point in the opposite direction and are turned off after hours. The nearest night-time floodlight is just beyond the southeast corner of the site, too far to properly illuminate the community (see coordinate B6 on page 1-6). Once night falls, it is easy for criminals to mask their activities. Many residents said they refuse to leave their homes at night, even to go to the bathroom or use the tap, because it is too dangerous.

**Poor Police Response**

It is not uncommon for a criminal to flee without being caught or to escape with their identity unknown as a result of the darkness. Very rarely are crimes reported to the police. If they are, police are unlikely to pursue criminals within informal settlements, as access is very difficult and dangerous for them. Furthermore, if an officer does catch an alleged perpetrator, they frequently drive them away from the scene and set them free without prosecution. In cases where the community manages to catch a criminal in the act, they often take punishment into their own hands by beating the caught thief or rapist. We were told of a case where a prospective intruder was killed. This further discourages police involvement, as those caught enforcing vigilante justice can find themselves in trouble with the police.
Fire Hazards

Another problem is with fire and fire safety. Fires pose a real threat as housing materials are easily flammable and the close quarters expedite the spread of fire from shack to shack.

Causes of Fire

Generally, Litha Park experiences one bad fire a year, with a few smaller, controllable fires intermittently. Most fires tend to be the result of negligence. We were told stories of intoxicated residents knocking over the stove or falling asleep and starting a fire. Most residents use either hot plates or paraffin stoves to do their cooking. The exposed flame is extremely dangerous as a loose article of clothing or a gust of wind can spread the fire. Occasionally fires erupt as a result of faulty electricity boxes and their associated issues, but most often human negligence is to blame. December tends to be the worst month for fires, mainly because people tend to drink more during the December holidays and celebrations.

Response to Fire

Community members tend to call the fire department when a fire occurs, but they also try to put fires out themselves using sand and buckets of tap water. One difficulty with the water bucket solution is that water taps are located along the exterior of the community. Residents must grab large buckets and containers, run them to the outside water taps, fill them, and make their way through winding paths back to the fire. This process is not only extremely time consuming, but much of the water is spilled before reaching its destination. The slow flow of water from the taps proves to be an additional impediment to the community fire response.

There are no formal warnings or fire alert systems in the settlement. When people learn of a fire, they simply yell to notify others. There are no fire detectors located in Litha Park and no organized way to get word of a fire out to the rest of the community. Similarly, there are no evacuation or firefighting plans. Residents claim that when news of a fire spreads some people will help out, while others will flee. Many of those who live nearby the inflamed shack will remove their belongings to minimize damage. Sadly, when these belongings are removed and placed out of the fire’s path, members from other communities often come in and steal them.

While there are no fire hydrants surrounding Litha Park, most of Cape Town's fire trucks are equipped with their own tanks of water. Since the fire trucks are not bound by hydrant locations, firefighting capabilities rely exclusively on accessibility. Due to the lack of roads or corridors wide enough to fit a vehicle, it is difficult for emergency vehicles to access the interior of Litha Park. The local fire department noted that even when there was an accessible path at one time, people tend to expand their shacks and add barriers, making them unreliable in the future. It can take the fire department upwards of an hour to find a path that they are able to infiltrate before fighting the flames. Cape Town officials have been cited saying, “The informal settlement’s high density and random planning prevent them from reaching the worst of the blaze.”

Fire of 2001:

The worst fire in recent history occurred in 2001, which destroyed between 200 and 300 shacks and claimed ten lives. The fire began when an individual, under the influence of alcohol, fell asleep while cooking over a flame stove. The fire quickly spread, and strong winds made fighting the fire impossible for the residents. The fire department took about 30 minutes to arrive and over an hour to find a spot to park their truck.
Lack of Community Space

Due to the high density of the shacks, Litha Park has very little common area left for open space, meeting spaces, or children's play areas. The residents use most of the available space outside their shacks for daily needs, such as washing and hanging clothes, making crafts, and doing prep work for cooking.

The residents identified the following community spaces, as shown below.

Much of the community space is either on the periphery or outside Litha Park. Community meetings mostly take place in small outdoor open spaces along Tandazo Road. Parks and children's play areas are either on the edge or outside the community to the north, all of which are not exclusive to the Litha Park community. The only indoor community space in Litha Park is a large shack, known as a church, which is partly for religious use. There are two entertainment pub spaces inside the community managed by residents for profit.

Many of the community spaces of Litha Park have to meet multiple needs of residents. For instance, the church is not only used for religious purposes, but also for meetings, and performance rehearsals. The community meeting space near the main entrance is also used for parking cars, hanging clothes, and as a play space for children. At the same time, adjacent shacks regard this temporary meeting area as their front yard.
Facilities within shared community spaces are often absent. For example, the church only has a few benches and a small table, making it difficult to accommodate larger gatherings. Leaks in the roof limits its use during rain. At the outdoor community meeting spaces along Tandazo Road, there are no benches or shelter overhangs, which is problematic for everyone including the elderly to join meetings.

One of the most pressing concerns is the lack of safe space. The park in the southeast corner could serve as a children's play area, however its reputation as "a dangerous place" puts children at risk of having their lunch money stolen by teenagers. A similar issue occurs with the few open spaces near the pubs. These spaces are not recognized by the residents as community space because of safety concerns. There is no lighting in these areas and they are often used by drunk adults. The children play in the narrow alleys inside the community, along the street, or near the shops.

The football field to the north does offer valuable structured play for children and young adults. The organization AMANDLA EduFootball runs football games in the early evenings on school days and later at night on the weekends. The organization serves over 1,500 kids from all over Khayelitsha Site B, and also offers life skills and gang prevention programs for youth. The well-lit and well-structured nature of this field makes it one of the safer activity areas for youth. It has not only shown to improve the safety of the corridor immediately adjacent to the field, but is credited with reducing crime in this section of Khayelitsha. While the field benefits the community, the fencing and outside ownership keeps Litha Park's use of the site restricted. The community is still in need of a children's play space that they can control and call their own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 2.13 Community Space Inventory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Pubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant space along Tandazo Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside of Litha Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park at SE corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park to the North</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 2.14 Inside of Litha Park's church](image1)

![Figure 2.15 AMANDLA EduFootball field, as seen from Litha Park](image2)
Unemployment

Most people living in Litha Park earn well below the national average income and fall below the national household subsistence level. Figure 2.16, below shows the employment breakdown in Litha Park as of 2013 according to CORC’s enumeration report.

![Figure 2.16 Employment in Litha Park](source: UT (Gardens and Ilitha Park) Household Enumeration Report 3)

As is the case with most informal settlements in South Africa, unemployment is a huge problem. The high rate of unemployment is partly due to a lack of skills training. Area high schools lack technical training, requiring residents to pay for training elsewhere. Non-public training organizations do operate in Khayelitsha, such as the Learn to Earn Centre and the Uvelwano Community Development Centre.

With unemployment so high, it is difficult for many residents to make ends meet. Based on CORC’s enumeration report, most households in the settlement earn less than R3,200 (US $320) per month. Some of the residents are living off social welfare grants, with the child support grant for the unemployed or low paid parent(s) being the most common. Some unemployed residents must manage with no grant assistance at all.

Of those employed, many work in the private sector. These are jobs that employ people both inside and outside the community. Some people work as painters, drivers, mechanics, or construction workers. Other people work within the community as babysitters, bakers, sewers, or hair dressers. Some find work in shoe repair, beading, driving instruction, recycling, electricity repair, illegal water taps installation, or car washing. Select shacks are used as retail stores, restaurants, small workshops, and beauty salons.

Some of the workers sell their products in local retail outlets. Many internal workers would like to grow their business, however they lack the money to buy materials. For those who are employed, income may be intermittent and unstable.
Recommendations

• Form A Community Association and Savings Fund

• Reduce Crime Rate

• Reduce Fire Risk

• Create Additional Community Spaces

• Create Work Opportunities

• Re-blocking:
  Comprehensive Community Planning
From the beginning, it seemed clear to us that re-blocking could resolve many of the problems in Litha Park—problems that stem from highly flammable shacks, a confusing and indefensible path system, lack of access for emergency vehicles, no individual toilets and water connections, no surface drainage, and inadequate public space. Re-blocking has its problems, however. It involves considerable social upheaval, and is reliant on city action that may significantly delay needed change. Because the community problems are urgent, we have also included additional, less invasive recommendations that can be implemented in the near future. These can help alleviate community problems in the short term, while major re-blocking or reorganization schemes can be considered further in the future.

While actions within Litha Park cannot solve national problems such as unemployment and crime, we do feel that these recommendations can make these problems less severe. Outside help may be needed, but the drive to implement these recommendations must come from the residents. This is compatible with the aims of SDI and CORC: Help people to help themselves.

**Form a Community Association and Savings Fund**

The problems that have been identified affect every resident of Litha Park. Most of them can be solved only if residents come together and work as a community. Many of our recommendations require some form of collective action, such as forming work groups, cooperatives, crime watches and investing in firefighting tools.

Many of the recommendations will cost money. A community savings fund can be used to pay for many of these communal goods or services, for example, purchasing extinguishers, hoses, and fire detectors, paying for watchmen, or installing exterior lighting. Any community-wide projects serving the greater benefit of the residents would be appropriate for a savings fund to finance. While funding assistance can come from outside NGOs and government agencies, residents will be in a far better position to apply for help if they have shown commitment with their own funds. The savings fund can also serve as a secure, convenient medium for accepting donations from these outside organizations.

Litha Park did have a community savings fund in the past, but it failed due to trust issues. To be successful, a fund must have strong leadership with clear and transparent rules on how the money is to be used. The community can apply for help to set up the fund. For example, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) has adopted the Community Upgrading Finance Facility (CUFF) which was created as a platform to directly fund community savings schemes for settlement upgrading projects.¹ It provides seed money directly to projects chosen by the community, for which the community must provide its own 20%.²
Reduce Crime Rate

Close Gaps
The current disorganized layout of Litha Park, with its many zigzagging pathways and blind corners greatly enables criminal activity. The porous exterior also creates many unmonitored entrances into the community, allowing easy ingress and egress for criminals.

Fixing the winding nature of the pathways is not possible without a major reconfiguration of the shacks, such as through re-blocking. There are many random and unnecessary gaps between shacks, however, that can be removed by the residents at a low cost. “Closing the gaps” is an approach that uses existing and readily available materials to fill or block unnecessary gaps between shacks. This can reduce the number of criminal hiding spots and escape paths, as well as help channel foot traffic through more visible corridors. Particular attention should be given to closing extraneous gaps around the border of the community, where entrances should be limited to fewer highly visible areas.

When choosing gaps to close, care must be taken to avoid closing off important pathways. The following guiding principles should be used:

- Identify the desired traffic flow, and keep these paths open. Priority should be given to the widest paths.
- Block off the gaps that are unnecessary for through traffic, subject to the following conditions
  - Note the location of each shack’s door to make sure you do not block access to entrances.
  - Make sure emergency access is still maintained. Each shack should have two ways of egress to avoid potential trapping in a fire or flooding.

While the purpose of closing the gaps is primarily for safety, residents can make use of blocked gaps in the following ways, as illustrated in Figure 3.1:

- Private storage space
- Shack expansion
- Storage of sandbags to use in case of fire or flood emergencies
- Vertical gardens (see Appendix C for more about vertical gardens)
Community Watch

A community watch program offers means to deter crime through greater social organization with minimal monetary resources. Litha Park residents have experimented with a community watch in the past, but it has since disbanded due to lack of volunteers. Too few people participated, which harmed the program in two ways. First, criminals threatened and targeted the few volunteers participating. Understandably, this scared volunteers and participation declined. Second, frequent volunteers began to get bored with the monotony of the task and ended their participation.

Despite the difficulties encountered, we strongly believe that a reformed community watch program could achieve effective results. By making a few changes, the longevity and efficacy of the program can be improved. The community watch should be a mandatory, daily patrol of Litha Park during the nighttime hours. Mandatory participation would increase the pool of patrollers, thus reducing the burden on each participant. Boredom from constant volunteering can be eliminated. Since the whole community will be constantly rotating through patrols, it would be much more difficult for criminals to isolate and target individuals. The whole community would be in it together.
If mandatory participation becomes problematic, the community could consider hiring individuals within their community, possibly young adults without current employment. This can help address some of the unemployment issues in the community by putting the jobless to an important task. Funding for these individuals could be allocated through the savings fund. Whether involvement is mandatory or incentivized with pay, the essential part of the program is that it needs to occur nightly amongst a greater number of participants.

We recommend that at least six or seven adults patrol the community each night. Each shack could provide just one adult every two months to achieve this patrol. If a shack has multiple adults, then each individual could serve even less than this.

The community watch can patrol the Litha Park in a number of different ways. Six people could stay together as one large patrol unit throughout the night. Another possibility is to assign pairs of patrollers to three separate sections of the community, as shown in Figure 3.3. It is important that all patrollers are paired with at least one other person at all times.

![Figure 3.3 Community Watch Breakdown](Color coded sections based on firefighting subarea plan (see page 3-9))

After its inception, the community watch program could evolve to serve more purposes than just as a crime deterrent. Those on patrol could enforce community rules and keep passages clear for access.
**Improve Street Lighting**

Lighting is one of Litha Park’s most absent resources. Incorporating well placed lighting would significantly improve night time visibility, and, in turn, safety. This comes as a challenge, however, as many of the low income residents are unable to afford the cost of shared lighting on their own. Many are also unwilling to provide what they feel to be a government responsibility.

While the government does provide lighting, it requires a long application and waiting process. To avoid delay, residents should begin installing lighting for themselves right away. They can install outside lighting on shacks (see Figure 3.6) at critical locations, such as dangerous corners, gathering spaces, and tap and toilet areas. Electricity for these lights should be paid for by the community association and not by individual shacks. Since the light benefits all walking through the pathways, the cost burden must be shared equally.

At the same time, the community should apply to the city for floodlights or street lights. These can light up larger areas at the government’s expense.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 3.4 Lighting Comparison Chart</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Floodlight</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Street Light</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Shack Light</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 3.5 Shack and Community Lighting Comparison**

- Floodlight (Community wide)
- Streetlight (Travel Corridor)
- Outdoor Shack Light (Small Group of Shacks)
Reduce Fire Risk

**Fire Alert System**
We strongly recommend an investment in the Khusela Early Warning System, a new fire detection system developed specifically for shack settlements. Khusela is a fire detector that sounds when heat is detected. By sensing heat rather than smoke, shack dwellers can still cook inside of their homes without fear of setting a false alarm. Initially, the system only alerts the shack where it detects a fire, but if the fire is not put out promptly, it will alert all Khusela systems within a 100 meter radius (this reaches the majority of Litha Park). This eliminates lag time between the fire starting and fire response. Initiating the firefighting response even just a few minutes earlier can greatly reduce the chance of fires spreading out of control. At only R85 (US $8.50) per unit, Khusela is a relatively affordable option that can prevent property damage and loss of life.

To maximize effectiveness, the entire community would need to buy in with one Khusela in each shack. Installing Khusela throughout all of Litha Park would cost about R34,800 (US $3,480). If only a handful of residents install the system, both its detection and alerting capacities would be subdued.

**Extinguishers and Hoses**
Due to the delay in fire department response, the communities ability to put out small fires themselves is critical. This can be improved by investment in firefighting tools such as fire extinguishers and/or community hoses.

**Fire Extinguishers**
Many big fires begin as small kitchen fires. Ideally, the community could invest in small fire extinguishers in each shack so that kitchen fires can be quickly extinguished before they spread. Unfortunately, fire extinguishers are expensive and require frequent maintenance. Also, new extinguisher will need to be purchased after each use. Smaller, individual sized fire extinguishers cost around R450 (US $45) per unit. This cost is more than five times the cost of one Khusela unit.

An alternative, and more economical solution would be for investment in a few larger, communal extinguishers. According to recent price data, larger fire extinguishers cost roughly R750 (US $75) per extinguisher.

**Hoses**
One of the greatest challenges is that residents must run buckets back and forth between the fire and the outside taps. Communal hoses could be purchased and attached to the tap nozzle during a fire. This could help bring a consistent stream of water directly to the engulfed shacks. To help recover their cost, hoses could also be used to aid in jobs, such as gardening or car washing.
**Assist the Fire Department**

Limited fire truck access to the interior of the community is a major obstacle to fighting fires. The City of Cape Town Fire and Rescue Services shared with us the measurements of their brigade—both the sizes of trucks (maximum width 3.1 meters) and the lengths of hoses (30 meters each, can be connected for extension). Relating this information with historical accounts of fire truck access by the residents, we created a fire truck coverage map as shown in figure 3.10. This map should be shared with the community and the fire department to better understand fire engine access in Litha Park.

This map shows the widths of roads and passageways around and into the community. This can help the fire department predict which fire truck can access which spaces ahead of time, reducing the time wasted searching for access on site. Second, the map shows the most direct corridors for fire hose access. Based on the street width and connectivity constraints, the! Fire Department Coverage Map shows areas most reachable by the fire truck hoses. The center area in grey is the danger zone where the fire department may not be able to readily access. It is not impossible to reach these areas, rather access is severely limited and time consuming. Areas within the danger zone should be the first recipients of other fire related improvements, such as the Khusela alarm, fire extinguishers or hoses.

This fire department coverage map should be used in conjunction with the firefighting subareas (see page 3-9) to assist fire fighters in knowing how to locate a fire, where exactly they can and cannot park, and if there are any barriers that may be in their way while driving through the community. The community should also use this to understand which critical access points need to be kept clear of debris or further shack encroachment.

**Figure 3.10 Fire Department Truck Coverage**

![Fire Department Truck Coverage Map]

(For a larger Fire Department Truck Coverage Map, see Appendix D)

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**Safekeeping Shared Tools:**

Community shared items, such as the fire extinguishers and hoses, must be stored where they are accessible during an emergency, but secure at all other times. Arranging a responsible caretaker willing to ensure their safekeeping and maintenance can be a challenge. As one option, community leaders from different sections could take charge in storing these firefighting investments.
Create Firefighting Subareas

Litha Park can bring greater order to their emergency response, whether it be for fire or crime, by organizing the community into smaller, more manageable sections. Figure 3.11 shows an example of how the community could be broken down into six different color-coded sections. Once assigned a color, each shack should denote that color next to their address information on their house.

These color-coded sections can serve many purposes. First, the breakdowns can assist the fire, police, or other emergency department services in locating shacks. The recurring problem of emergency vehicles arriving on site, but unable to locate specific shacks, has created unnecessary emergency response delays. Although shacks are marked with numbers, finding a house address can still be very confusing due to their chaotic layout. Emergency dispatch may be better directed with a simple “Litha Park - red section,” which helps narrow down the location to a smaller but visually apparent area.

These smaller organizational units offer advantages in many other parts of Litha Park life, including evacuation plans and crime watches. In drafting the subarea plan, residents could also designate specific evacuation spots for the different colors in the instance of fire or flooding. With pre-designated meeting points, there is less chaos during the actual emergency and a reduced worry of separation amongst families during evacuation. Within each colored section, a community action plan should also be created. This plan could consist of selected leaders from each section who are in charge of directing and managing a crisis situation. For example, if a fire were to occur in the red section, the section leader could designate who calls the fire department, organize who to fight the fire and which taps to use, and designate an evacuation leader.
Create Additional Community Spaces

Create multi-use spaces
In order to create open spaces in Litha Park without the kind of major disruption that accompanies re-blocking, the Community Association should use the community savings fund supplemented by outside grants, to buy shacks that are vacant. Alternatively, a community bylaw could mandate that land occupied by shacks automatically return to the community after a certain period of abandonment. The shacks can then either be demolished to create open space or kept as intact for community facility uses.

An open space or community facility can serve a variety of purposes; these may include children’s play, daycare, community meetings and events, laundry, workshop, food market, classroom, or storage for emergency equipment and supplies. It is important that the location of open spaces be carefully considered. They should be readily visible from well-travelled paths and faced by bounding shacks for constant surveillance. Economic spaces that sell goods should be placed along the formal roadways at the edge for greater market visibility. Community centered functions, such as a playground, storage space or a meeting hall should be in the interior of the community for easy and safe access to the residents. To avoid haphazard transformation of these spaces, we recommend that the community pre-plan their future vision. As shack vacancies become available, the plan can guide shack conversions into larger, more deliberately placed community spaces.

Demolition can also be used to widen access along critical corridors. There are points along main travel paths that are almost wide enough for fire engine or police access, but may require the removal or small size reduction of select shacks along the path. See the Fire Department Truck Coverage Map in Appendix D for restricted corridors.

Maintain an Inventory of Vacant Shacks
Residents should establish and continually update a list of occupied and vacant shacks. This way, the community will know which shacks are potentially available for acquisition and conversion. The Community Association should ask all residents to fill out a form that lists the number, ownership, and tenure of their shack. This not only helps determine which shacks are vacant, but also provides a valuable way of contacting the entire community.
Create Work Opportunities within the Community

Form Cooperatives
As noted earlier, a number of residents in Litha Park are unemployed even though they have skills in areas such as child care, hairdressing, sewing, beading, baking, building maintenance, shoe repair, and carpentry. They cannot practice their skills because they lack suitable space, such as, for day care, and lack money for materials and equipment. One solution would be for groups of residents to get together to form cooperatives. A cooperative consists of a group of people who work together for mutual benefit and who manage the group’s activities. Members of a cooperative pool their funds to acquire space or to buy equipment and supplies such as sewing machines, beads, cloth, or leather. They share in all profits from sales. Residents should apply for grants to help in setting-up costs, and to learn how to organize and manage cooperatives.

Tap into the Tourist Trade
Cape Town attracts a great many tourists with a strong market demand for locally produced handcrafted items. While there is already strong competition among vendors, residents in Litha Park could gain an advantage if they earn a reputation for attractive designs and careful quality control. Cooperatives should apply for loans and grants to get help in creating and promoting a distinctive Litha Park brand with a recognizable logo, as demonstrated in Figure 3.20.
**Acquire Workspace**
As we noted earlier, some shacks in Litha Park are rented, others are vacant. Working together with other community organizations, cooperatives should rent or buy available shacks and turn them into workspace/shops where members can work and sell their products to local residents and outsiders.

**Acquire Training**
Individual residents and future cooperatives in Litha Park can find new job opportunities by expanding their skill set. There are a number of existing organizations that can help with job training, some very close to home. Silulo Ulutho Technologies, located in Litha Park, offers basic computer training and business services. It can also support other cooperative businesses with computer repairs and maintenance services. Residents can also go to the Learn to Earn Centre by the Khayelitsha train station, where computer, sewing, woodworking, baking, home management, and business skills training are offered.⁵
Re-Blocking: Comprehensive Community Planning

In addition to the smaller, short term recommendations discussed, the community should consider longer range reform that can improve Litha Park in a more substantial way. The government policy shift and growing employment of ‘re-blocking’ offers one option to completely reorganize the shacks. This ‘redo’ of Liha Park can create a improved layout, incorporate much needed municipal infrastructure, and comprehensively address all community issues at once.

Physical Impacts of Re-blocking

There are many physical changes possible in re-blocking that impact both the shared common space and private shacks.

Roadways: New roads can be constructed wider, straighter, and often paved with gravel or asphalt. The road network layout can be redesigned to add or remove connections into and throughout the community as needed.

Shack Reorientation: Re-blocking typically requires the rebuilding of most shacks in the community, offering a chance to reorganize their layout and orientation. This allows for the redesign of the common space shared between the shacks.

Regrading: Limited earthwork can be done with the incorporation of new infrastructure, helping improve the drainage and flood prevention.

Utilities: The building of municipal roadways offers a right-of-way for constructing several essential utility services.

Water and Sewer: Additional water and sewer mains can be constructed into the interior of the community. New fire hydrant installation can also be installed off of the water mains.

Storm Drain: Drainage inlets and storm drain pipe are usually placed along the constructed roadways. Additional extensions into common areas may be constructed as well.

Outdoor Lighting: New public lighting can be installed within the community, either in the form of large flood lights or street lights.

Figure 3.21 Reblocking Example from the Flamingo community

Figure 3.22 A paved road being constructed in Flamingo, one step in its re-blocking upgrade.
Potential for Tenure and Formalization
While re-blocking usually does not grant land ownership rights to upgraded informal settlements, it can be the first step towards formalized tenure. There are many benefits to land ownership. For the individual, ownership of both the home and the land provides stability of home occupancy, removing the threat of eviction. A guarantee of permanence also encourages homeowners to invest in their property and surroundings, which benefits the entire community.⁶

If individual ownership is not practical, a simple “right to occupy” may be obtained. In this case, the government does not grant ownership, but recognizes the right of the inhabitants to live on the property. This is much more likely to be granted if a settlement goes through a government regulated re-blocking process, as the land would be designated suitable for occupation, and the government would gain regulatory, policing, and utility administration control of the settlement.⁷

Impact on Problem Areas
Wise layout choices can help alleviate many of the problems experienced by the community. Re-blocking can benefit the four main problem areas in the following ways shown in Figure 3.23.

While re-blocking can provide a number of benefits, layout design must be carefully planned to achieve these results. The process also requires a high level of resources, time, and coordination with outside entities. To help guide the community on re-blocking, additional information on physical design tips, costs, process and available resources are provided in Appendix B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Improvement</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>Community Space</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roadways (Wide, straight streets)</td>
<td>Greater line of sight on major travel paths</td>
<td>Easy fire truck access extended into community, shortens access time and extends hose reach</td>
<td>Wider roads offer more space for informal outdoor community activity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police access for patrol cars</td>
<td>Wider gap on streets can help isolate fire and prevent spreading to other blocks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shack Reorganization</td>
<td>Removes unnecessary gaps between shacks and blind corners. Reduces criminal hiding spots and escape paths.</td>
<td></td>
<td>New common spaces can be created for washing, cooking, children’s play areas, meetings, etc.</td>
<td>Shared space for craftwork and stores can be created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Windows and doors can be oriented toward main travel ways and /or courtyards, providing more monitoring of specific spaces.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Sewer Extension (Shorter distance to taps and toilets)</td>
<td>Reduces risk of being followed and attacked while walking to the tap or bathroom, especially at night</td>
<td>Quicker access to taps while putting fires out with buckets</td>
<td>Incorporation of taps and toilets into new community spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fire hydrants ensure fire trucks do not run out of water in their tanks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Lighting</td>
<td>Illumination of travel paths and tap/toilet areas increases night time visibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safer, illuminated pathways improve walking to night time employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion
This report has laid out a foundation for Litha Park to proactively improve their living conditions. The four major issues addressed were crime, fire hazards, lack of community space, and unemployment. With more than 1,400 shack dwellers, there is an urgent need for action over the next few years. More manageable and short-term fixes are recommended while the community waits to accomplish larger, more long-term solutions.

Crime has been a problem due to the high density, small pathways, and extreme unemployment rates. Our recommendations of closing the gaps, creating a community watch, and improving street lights can help reduce some of the crime rate. Options like closing the gaps use minor resources and can be accomplished without outside help.

Fire has taken too many lives from the Litha Park community. Investment in fire alarm systems, hoses and/or extinguishers can control fires before the fire department needs to get involved. Fire department coverage mapping and organizing the community in sub-areas can help the fire department once they arrive.

Community Space is very limited throughout Litha Park. In order to create space, the community has to understand that this will take a long period of time to create new open space, a community center, and playground areas. The community should begin buying vacant shacks to expand their community space needs.

Unemployment plagues Litha Park and leaves residents with few resources to help create a prosperous and safe community. Residents should combine their work skills into cooperatives, take advantage of tourism, create workshop space, and take advantage of skills training in the area. Forming cooperatives will be the most critical to starting small businesses utilizing shared skills and resources.

For long-term planning, we recommend consideration of re-blocking to be done with the City of Cape Town. It is a burdensome process, but can accomplish a level of reorganization that cannot be achieved by the short-term, incremental solutions. By using our suggested design recommendations, the community could substantially alleviate many of its issues. Since this takes many years to implement, we recommend that this process be initiated concurrently with the other shorter term recommendations.

It is up to the community to decide which recommendations suit them best. Implementing them will require substantial cooperation between all community members. The ability to understand that these problems are shared and require collective action will be critical for success. The residents of Litha Park have already shown themselves to be incredibly resourceful and resilient in the face of adversity, and should be able to accomplish great lengths when set on a clear direction. As each recommendation is followed, the community will only grow stronger and will be able to become better advocates for the way their community will change.

While this report is primarily for the service of the Litha Park community, we hope that the information provided can extend to help other communities. Litha Park is one of many informal settlement communities in Khayelitsha, many of which face similar issues and challenges. We hope that this report can guide other communities in understanding these similar problems, and provide them with ideas for solving them with their own initiative. This study of Litha Park should also serve as a general expansion of knowledge in the growing literature on informal settlements.
Appendices

- Appendix A: Planning Process and Approach
- Appendix B: Re-blocking Guide
- Appendix C: Vertical Gardens
- Appendix D: Fire Department Truck Coverage Map
- Appendix E: List of Terms
- Appendix F: References
Appendix A: Planning Process and Approach

While working with the residents of Litha Park, we aimed to maintain a community driven approach. Our primary purpose as planners in this project was to serve the community of people living within the informal settlement of Litha Park. This was important to define, as it established the current residents of the community as our client. Their needs override the interests of other stakeholders, such as neighboring communities or government agencies. It was also important that the main issues at stake be defined by the community itself. It was critical that we examined problems that were found to be most pressing by the residents, and not merely perceived to be problems from outsiders.

In addition to clearly defining our client, it was also important to define our roles as planners. We aimed to fulfill the following roles in the process:

- **Facilitator** – Initiate community discussion of shared issues
- **Compiler** – Collect and interpret broader community opinion
  - Gather site data and information on outside organizations
- **Advisor** – Recommend a range of solution options. Educate on cost/benefits, and means of achievement

Most of the information we gathered about issues in Litha Park came directly from Litha Park residents themselves. Several meetings and focus groups were held that featured community leaders, employed workers, children and other concerned residents of Litha Park. Discussions with the community focused on identifying their main problems, understanding these problems, and exploring potential solutions.

**Phase 1: Networking**

- **June 3rd, 2014**
  - UMD team connected with CORC/SDI partners and toured potential partner communities (UT Gardens, UT Litha Park, and Allieum Drive). Project purpose and general community issues were introduced.

**Phase 2: Problem Identification**

- **June 10th, 2014**
  - Litha Park is selected as partner community, community leadership meets to brainstorm main problems. Problems selected are Crime, Fire, Community Space, and Unemployment.

**Phase 3: Problem Understanding**

- **June 11th-14th, 2014**
  - Crime, fire, open space, and unemployment discussed with community focus groups.
- **June 18th, 2014**
  - Understanding Children’s Play focus group conducted with children in all age groups. Detailed site survey was completed for pathways and perimeter of community.
- **June 19th, 2014**
  - Understanding employment needs focus group and Solutions Feedback from Litha Park.

**Phase 4: Solution Development**

- **June 20th-23rd, 2014**
  - Solutions refined, developed, and selected by team members.
- **June 24th, 2014**
  - Presentation draft is given to CORC/SDI for feedback.

**Phase 5: Final Presentation**

- **June 27th, 2014**
  - Final presentation is given in Litha Park to community members.
Focus Groups:
Focus Groups consisted of community leaders and volunteers chosen by the community. The larger group was broken down into three subgroups of 4-5 residents each to facilitate open discussion.

Process Reflection
Community focus group discussions, particularly those focused on defining and understanding the problems, were very effective in garnering information from the community. There were several factors that we believe contributed to their success.

Trust: It was very important to overcome any trust issues early in the process so that the community members could feel free to honestly discuss their situation. Working through their established relationship with SDI / CORC gave us some initial credibility by association. We made it clear that this research was for their benefit, and that they had control over its direction and sharing of personal information such as population statistics and photos. Meetings were held at both the SDI / CORC office and the Litha Park church, offering a chance for everyone to become comfortable in each other’s turf. Beginning meetings with more sociable exercises, such as individual icebreaker introductions and a prayer in Xhosa, helped establish a more personal relationship. Continuing to meet with the same community members over multiple days helped build trust as well.

Small Focus Group Size: It was good to have a sizable volunteer group to represent the community, but community members tended to be less open and less vocal when they were together in the full group of about twelve people. We found it very helpful to break the group down into separate smaller focus groups of 4-5 people each. Community members tended to open up and speak more freely in this situation, as the interaction felt more like a personal discussion rather than speaking to a full room.

Informal but Directed: Since we relied heavily on the community to define and educate us on their issues, we found that leaving questions open for evolving discussion and unplanned follow-up questions worked best. This did not mean, however, that we left meetings unorganized. It was still important to keep the focus groups directed and on track to cover the agenda. This was accomplished by keeping the broader topics for each meeting and focus group rotation well defined. Sub-questions within each topic were prepared ahead of time to keep meetings flowing when open discussion stalled. Strict time limits were also set for each session to make sure the full agenda was accomplished.

In some cases, the community focus groups were not as successful as anticipated. This occurred when attempting to discuss and solicit reaction to solution ideas. Community members tended to get tied up in lengthy discussions that made it difficult to get through all topics. They were also reluctant to give approval or disapproval to solution ideas, as they felt as if they were speaking for the entire community and were uncomfortable making decisions on their behalf. As facilitators, we should have better communicated that the meeting was not about deciding solutions, but merely to discuss and gain feedback on potential solutions. This may have encouraged the community members to speak more readily from individual opinion and experience rather than feeling pressured to form a group consensus.

Appendix A
Appendix B: Re-blocking Guide

Physical Design Recommendations
If Litha Park decides to pursue re-blocking, it will be up to the whole community to decide the layout of these physical features. To help maximize the benefit of re-blocking, we offer the following design tips to be considered during the community design process.

Road / Passageway Layout
The travel network within the community can be a combination of wider main roads and narrow pedestrian only pathways. More main roads will improve access and utility coverage, but will further reduce space for shacks and other needs. An appropriate balance will need to be agreed upon by the community.

It is critical that the main access roads be wide enough to accommodate a fire engine or other emergency vehicles. A 6 meter standard width (from shack to shack) is recommended for emergency service, but a 4 meter minimum width may be sufficient in limited stretches. Ideally, main roads should be spaced no more than 60 meters apart to bring all shacks in the community within reach of a fire engine’s 30 meter hose. This level of fire service can be achieved with the hypothetical road upgrade layout shown in Figure 4.4.

Entry points at the border of the community should balance the need for resident access with the need for safety. Providing two entry points per side (about 50-60 meters apart) would allow for convenient circulation in and out of the site for residents. The perimeter between these entry points should be blocked off with shacks (no gaps) and/or fences to prevent unmonitored criminal ingress/egress.

Main roads should be as straight as possible, with through connections on both sides for easy emergency vehicle maneuverability. This is also important for providing a long line of sight, which helps with crime monitoring and prevention. The layout should expand on existing major travel paths, and give priority to connection to important destinations such as the train station, schools, and football field.
**Shack Orientation**

Other re-blocking projects have clustered shack units around small courtyards. These areas can provide for localized community space where people can conduct chores and children can play. These areas have the safety benefit of being monitored by close neighbors, but are also at risk of becoming dead-end hiding spots for criminals. If clusters are used, it is important that they remain close and visible to main roadways, and should be kept well lit by a street or flood light. Shack windows and doors should be oriented for monitoring of important outdoor spaces. Monitoring of cluster courtyards can be improved by pointing all shack windows and doors in toward the cluster. Main travel paths should also be kept monitored with windows placed all along the corridor.

**Employment and Community Space**

Employment spaces that are involved with the sale of goods would ideally be located on the edge of the site along Tandazo Drive and Cwayi Cres. These areas have the most visibility from foot and car traffic, which benefits economic activity.

Community space, including children's play areas and meeting spaces, would be best located in the interior of the site. This way children and adults can more easily access these spaces without having to walk to the edge or outside of the community where they are more likely to be targeted for crime. It would also enforce exclusive community ownership of these areas.
Placement of Taps and Toilets

In the most beneficial scenario, a tap and toilet connection would be given to each individual shack. Municipal and budget restraints, however, may limit extensions to new communal tap and toilets. In such a case, communal tap and toilet locations should be extended to evenly distributed locations inside the site. By reducing the travel distance and eliminating the need to travel to the community edge, night time trips to the tap or toilet can be made safer. They should also be placed in highly visible locations, such as road intersections, open space and/or cluster courtyards to enforce safety. Reduced distance to taps will also help with community firefighting capabilities.

Costs of Re-blocking

Re-blocking cannot be achieved without a heavy commitment and sacrifice from the community. The planning process itself is intensive, potentially spanning over several years. Since re-blocking impacts the entire community, all households must be involved and approve of the plan. Tensions may develop between neighbors if disagreements become contentious. There may be additional complications in this case, as some shacks from the neighboring TT section have no clear physical separation from Litha Park. Re-blocking may have to be a joint effort between the UT and TT sections.

Funding requirements are significant. Most of the funding for past re-blocking projects came from outside sources, such as the government, NGOs, and philanthropic funding. These sources take time to coordinate and may be limited in availability. The Litha Park community would likely have to contribute to the cost for the actual relocation and rebuilding of shacks. In the case of the re-blocking Mtshini Wam, a 250-shack community, the community savings fund paid for 20% of new structure cost with the rest covered by CUFF funding.\(^2\)

Assuming a similar breakdown of cost, the 400 shacks of Litha Park may cost about R5,268,000 (US $526,800), with R278,000 (US $27,800) contribution needed from the community.
The impact on individually owned shacks is very intrusive. To construct the infrastructure and create new communal space, the existing shacks must be demolished and rebuilt to conform to the re-blocking plan. While other re-blocked communities were able to rebuild shacks over a day or two, there is a significant amount of displacement that must be managed. Residents will need to temporarily store their belongings and sleep elsewhere during the demolition and reconstruction processes. In the case of the Flamingo community, which was reconstructed in several phases, temporarily displaced residents stored their items in neighbor's shacks. Some temporarily stayed in their neighbor's shacks, while others were arranged to stay in temporary government housing.

Given the high density of shacks in Litha Park, making room for roads and new community space will very likely require a reduction of shack size for all residents. This is a necessary sacrifice to achieve expanded communal space without forcing eviction. The current shack size in Litha Park averages about 24 square meters. For comparison, the Flamingo community reduced its shacks to sizes ranging between 10-20 square meters each after re-blocking. Litha Park’s shack sizes may of course differ from this depending on how much land is desired to be dedicated to shared uses, but the community can expect a reduction in shack size to make way for roadways, courtyards and other shared uses.

Post re-blocking, the community must also sacrifice certain freedoms to maintain their plan. Preventing future encroachment into shared spaces and roadways requires vigilance in enforcement. This is an extra burden on the community leadership. The City of Cape Town Government may also step up intervention efforts to prevent encroachment, subjecting the community to outside intervention and regulation.

Available Resources
There are a number of case studies and guides available on the process and design of re-blocking:

Upgrading Process and Design Guides

Informal Settlements Handbook, 2005
Western Cape Government - Human Settlement Development
Description: Chapter 9 describes the settlement upgrading opportunity benefits and disadvantages from the government point of view. Chapter 10 provides technical guidance on how to upgrade settlements.
Location: http://www.westerncape.gov.za/general-publication/informal-settlements-handbook

NUSP Resource Kit
National Upgrading Support Programme - Department of Human Settlements - Republic of South Africa
Description: Offers tips on the process, design and financing of in situ upgrades for informal settlements.
Location: http://www.upgradingsupport.org/content/page/nusp-resource-kit
Reblocking: A Partnership Guide
Worcester Polytechnic Institute and the Community Organization Resource Centre (CORC)
Description: A detailed process guide to reblocking based on real collaboration between CORC and reblocked communities in Cape Town.
Location: http://wp.wpi.edu/capetown/files/2012/12/Reblocking-Guidebook.pdf

Community Upgrading Financing Facility (CUFF) Project Report - 2013
SDI South African Alliance
Description: Case studies of SDI work with upgrading settlements throughout South Africa. Guidance on community-led finance facilities and reblocking.
Location: http://sasdialliance.org.za/tag/masikhase/

Financial Resources
Major funding for upgrading informal settlement comes from the national government. The national Upgrading Informal Settlement Programme provides funds to local municipalities for settlement upgrading activities, such as re-blocking. Money is granted through the Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) and the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), for which the government expects a 10% cosponsor from the local municipality. These funds are granted to municipalities only, not to individuals, and can be used for land purchase, rehabilitation, planning, design and installation of infrastructure. Generally, the national government does not provide money for the actual housing, unless the settlement is upgraded to formal township status. For Litha Park reblocking, funding from these sources depends on the City of Cape Town to apply for these funds.4

The following funding sources are more accessible to direct application by the community of Litha Park and/or their partner NGO. They can also be used for smaller upgrading projects, no just re-blocking.

The Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP) established the uTshani fund to grant loans to community-led housing construction and incremental informal settlement upgrading. It is the funding source for The Community Upgrading Financing Facility (CUFF), which gives directly to women’s savings schemes used for small scale incremental upgrading projects.5

Latin American, African and Asian Social Housing Service is a foundation that supports housing for the poor living in unsafe and unstable conditions. SELAVIP helped fund reblocking of the Sheffield Road in the City of Cape Town. Maximum funding per project is R640,700 (US $64,000).
The **Percy Fox Foundation** works to improve quality of life within squatters associations and low income cooperatives. They also helped fund reblocking of the Sheffield Road in the City of Cape Town.

*Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI)* is a subsidiary of Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI). They provide funds to SDI affiliate organizations that pass the funds on to savings federations for the poor. It operates under the philosophy that the poor should co-manage their improvement programs.

http://www.sdinet.org/upfi/
Vertical gardens, also known as green walls, are walls partially or completely covered with vegetation that include a growing medium, such as soil. Most vertical gardens also feature an integrated water delivery system, such as drainage from the rooftop. They may be indoors or outside, freestanding or attached to an existing wall, and come in a great variety of sizes. Vertical gardens are useful for places with limited space as they grow up instead of out, making them ideal for Litha Park. Only a very minimal space is needed, yet it can produce a significant gain. Not only can vertical gardens be used as an affordable source of food for the individual operating the garden, but they can also be used for economic gain by selling excess produce. There are many local NGOs in the area, such as Touching the Earth Lightly, that support vertical gardens. Touching the Earth Lightly has designed the first prototype low-tech vertical food-garden systems for informal settlements, piloting in Langrug and Langa in Cape Town.

Incorporating the vertical gardens in the space created in the “close the gaps” strategy is ideal (see page 3-3). The gaps between shacks can be used to grow a variety of herbs and fruits in crates, which can be easily transported in and out of the resident's shack to avoid theft. Possible crops that could be grown in vertical gardens include tomatoes, spinach, strawberries, celery, rocket, spearmint, spekbook, chives, basil, thyme, coriander or rhubarb.
Apartheid: system of racial segregation that existed in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. Under Apartheid, a series of social codes were enacted that severely diminished the rights of blacks including limiting where they could live and what jobs they could work.

Black: term under Apartheid for blacks, or what the United States would call African American. Unlike in the United States where many people who are of mixed race are called black, in South Africa to be “black” requires 100% African blood.

Colored: term for individuals of mixed ethnic origin and racial identity.

Cooperative: a voluntary group of people who work together for mutual benefit. Cooperatives are owned and managed by its members. There are many types of cooperatives including food co-ops, housing co-ops, and consumer co-ops, but in all cases members work together to seek benefit for everyone involved, typically when the power of the group is more powerful than individual members themselves.

CORC: Community Organization Resource Center; partner organization with SDI that works with informal settlement communities.

External employment: refers to employment that takes place outside of the community where one lives. External employment can be formal or informal.

Floodlight: a tall, bold light, generally placed in the middle of informal settlements to provide light at night. Due to their strength, one floodlight can often light up a very large area.

Formal employment: refers to employment that is regulated and wages are taxed. Typically those formally employed receive regular wages and benefits. Formal employment can be internal or external.

Informal employment: refers to employment that is not regulated and typically “under the table.” Examples of informal jobs include babysitting, cooking, sewing and other task in which money is transferred directly from consumer to producer. Informal employment can be internal or external.

Informal Settlement: an area self-constructed housing on land not legally occupied by the residents, often found outside of cities, on public land, or along transit corridors. Informal settlements frequently often lack formal sanitation and electricity infrastructure and can be found in developing nations around the world.

Internal employment: refers to employment that takes place inside of the community where one lives. Internal employment can be formal or informal.
Khayelitsha: a section of Cape Town containing the majority of its informal settlements. The 2014 population of Khayelitsha is estimated to be close to 500,000 people. Litha Park is located in the UT section of Khayelitsha.

Khusela: a small fire detector specifically designed for use in informal settlements.

Rand: the currency of South Africa. In June 2014, 1 Rand was equivalent to approximately 10 cents in the U.S. Dollar.

Re-blocking: spatial reconfiguration of shacks in informal settlements to accommodate the addition of roads, utility lines, and community spaces.

SDI: Shack/Slum Dwellers International; international organization whose South African office is partnered with CORC to provide capacity building services to informal settlements.

Shack: unit of housing in informal settlements. While sizes and materials vary, a typical shack in Litha Park averages around 24 square meters and constructed from scraps of wood, drywall, and corrugated metal.

Township: a term referring to a residential development for blacks and colored. Township refers to both those areas with formal, developed housing as well as informal settlements.

UT Litha Park: the specific community within Khayelitsha that our project revolves around.

Xhosa: one of the many tribal languages that originated in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Because informal settlements have large numbers of immigrants, Xhosa has become the dominant language in Khayelitsha.
Appendix F: References

Background

What is an Informal Settlement?


Informal Settlements in Cape Town


[7] City of Cape Town, Policy #13282.

Khayelitsha and Litha Park
[8] Cleminshaw, Dot, “From Crossroads to Khayelitsha to…?” (South Africa:...)

Problems in Litha Park

Crime

Fire Hazards

Unemployment
**Recommendations**

**Form a Community Association and Savings Fund**


**Extinguishers and Hoses**


**Re-blocking**


[Figure 3.7] http://affordablehousinginstitute.org/blogs/us/wp-content/uploads/448_jadibanagar_paved_sm_071005.jpg

[Figure 3.8] http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/65/Floodlights.jpg

Appendix F
Appendices

Appendix B: Re-blocking Guide


Appendix C: Vertical Gardens


[Figure 4.10] http://touchingtheearthlightly.com/project/the-green-shack-prototype-exhibited-at-the-design-indaba-2013/.

[Figure 4.11] http://touchingtheearthlightly.com/project/the-green-shack-prototype-exhibited-at-the-design-indaba-2013/.
