

Regional Recreation Facilities

Introduction

Regional recreation facilities often use large areas of land, sometimes with significant infrastructure and buildings, and are dedicated to a specific type or broad range of recreation and sporting activities. The planning of these facilities is especially important given the nature of their size and the number of users or spectators that are likely to use or attend the facility. Facilities that could be categorised as a regional recreation facility include sports stadia, equestrian centres, children's play facilities, aquatic centres and major playing fields incorporating a range of different organised sports such as athletics, tennis, hockey, soccer and netball.



Accessible and appropriate recreational facilities can contribute to increased physical activity in adults and children

Source: Planning Institute of Australia

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Regional recreation facilities cater for organised sports that attract not only those persons participating in the sport but also spectators. The priority, from a health planning perspective, is to ensure that clearly designated sports facilities are provided on a regional scale and that active transport options are available for users to access these facilities (Sunjara, 2008).

The location and type of regional recreation facility should consider equitable distribution within a town, city or region to allow maximum access to users and attendees.

Health & Planning Fact

People who are involved in organised sport can be players or be involved in non-playing roles such as coaches, umpires and administrators. People can also be involved in more than one kind of sport or physical activity and in more than one role. In the 12 months to April 2007, an estimated 4.5 million people aged over 15 years (27% of people 15 years and over) reported they were involved in organised sport and physical activity. This included 3.8 million players and 1.6 million people in non-playing roles (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

The West Australian Department of Sport and Recreation, 2009, cites the benefits of participating in sport and physical activity to include:

- improved physical health and wellbeing
- improved mental health
- enhanced social outcomes and
- reduced health care costs.

PRACTICE ADVICE

The following sets out advice for practitioners on good practice or minimum standards and optimum practice or stretch principles for this development type.

Good Practice

- When the facility is expected to have a large number of attendees such as football stadiums, public transport options should be available.
- Walking and cycling networks should provide easy access to the facility for both day and night time use including consideration of safety issues such as including sufficient lighting, legible access routes and signage.
- End of trip facilities should be provided for pedestrians and cyclists, including secure bike storage.
- The facility should cater for a range of age groups and where practicable a range of users.

Optimum Practice

Spatial Location

- Located within the region to optimise access for the community.
- Where possible, located close to a major activity centre to take advantage of the sustainable transport options and limit conflict with adjoining land uses.

Transport Network and Design

- Located on a public transport route with high frequency services, and additional services provided where a significant sporting event is scheduled.
- Public transport stops located at the facility with safe access into the facility.
- Pedestrian and cycling network provides easy access to the facility for both day and night time use.
- Appropriate lighting and signage and public toilets are provided.
- End of trip facilities provided for pedestrians and cyclists, including water fountains, seating, secure bike storage and change facilities.
- Street network is designed to facilitate ease of access to the facility.
- Street network, car and bike parking and circulation arrangements are designed to minimise conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- The surrounding street system is capable of accommodating the additional traffic generated by the use and car parking is situated on site.

Useability

- Illuminate sporting areas, and associated seating and parking areas with lighting, without compromising the amenity of adjacent land uses.
- Consider them being used by recreational walkers such as walking around the perimeter of the oval.
- Provide toilets and change facilities.

Development Type – Regional Recreation Facilities

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- Provide seating, bins, shaded areas and other appropriate facilities.
- Ensure safe and clear entrances and exits.

Avoid

- Not having public transport available as this will encourage car use with resultant parking and congestion problems if no alternate travel options are available.

REFERENCES

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