



## ECO-SPORT IN THE SPACE OF MODERN CITY

Abstract – The aim of the article is to review current trends in urban spatial solutions and sports activating programs on the example of selected cities. Attractive sports infrastructure encouraging outdoor recreation close to place of residence is an important challenge for countries to reduce sedentary lifestyle, especially for the youngest (indigenous and immigrant) urban residents, and to promote social integration of all age groups.

Keywords: sport for all; urban sport; sports city; sustainable city.

## ECO-ESPORTE NO ESPAÇO DA CIDADE MODERNA

Resumo - O objetivo do artigo é revisar as tendências atuais em soluções espaciais urbanas e programas de ativação de esportes a partir de exemplos em cidades selecionadas. Uma infraestrutura esportiva atrativa que incentiva a recreação ao ar livre e perto do local de residência é um desafio importante para os países reduzirem o sedentarismo, especialmente para os jovens e populações especiais (como indígenas e imigrantes), além de promover a integração social de todas as faixas etárias.

Palavras-chave: esporte para todos; esporte urbano; cidade esportiva; cidade sustentável.

## ECO-DEPORTE EN EL ESPACIO DE LA CIUDAD MODERNA

Resumen - El propósito del artículo es revisar las tendencias actuales en soluciones espaciales urbanas y programas de activación deportiva a partir de ejemplos en ciudades seleccionadas. Una infraestructura deportiva atractiva que incentive la recreación al aire libre y cercana al lugar de residencia es un desafío importante para que los países reduzcan los estilos de vida sedentarios, especialmente para los jóvenes y poblaciones especiales (como indígenas e inmigrantes), además de promover la integración social de todos los grupos de edad.

Palabras-clave: deporte para todos; deporte urbano; ciudad deportiva; ciudad sustentable.

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## **Introduction**

Sport is nowadays an important element of the city's sports and tourism space. Today, sport plays a huge role in the promotion of cities and the economic development of tourist regions, occupying more and more urban spaces for the improvement of the quality of life of residents and sports tourists. Cities attract national and international sports events, promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, and expand their sports facilities through the regular expansion of buildings, which are visited by more and more tourists who want to visit them or watch the event taking place there. Both sport and tourism have long been perceived as urban regeneration mechanism<sup>1</sup>. The development of outdoor activities has for many years been dominated by the appropriation of new spaces and the creation of new sports equipment enabling the exploration of nature<sup>2</sup>. However, sports enthusiasts are increasingly looking for attractive forms of physical activity every day in big cities too. It is said that one of the upcoming tasks of cities in the coming years is to intensify activities related to the development of sport and tourism as a mechanism that binds the social tissue.

## **Trends in management of urban space for sport – selected examples**

Contemporary cities try to create an opportunity to develop and shape various forms of socio-economic and cultural life in the fullest possible harmony with nature. In spatial policy, approaches such as inner-city ecology or a city in an ecosystem are increasingly noticed. One of the most important functional spaces of cities are spaces for sport, and sport itself is now a phenomenon incomparable to other phenomena. 21st century sport is predicted to become the first truly global culture in human history. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, sport and Olympism joined the global ecological movement and the creation of a harmonious man with the broadly understood environment (natural and urban)<sup>3</sup>. Scientists have recognized the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics as the potential origins of the modern green Olympic movement. The organizing committee has initiated more than 20 sustainable development projects to make sports competitions environmentally friendly. In 1996, the Olympic Charter was amended to include the mission of sustainable development and respect for the environment. Further development included the adoption of Agenda 21 for the Olympic Movement by the International Olympic Committee in 1999, which (like the United

Nations Agenda 21 on Sustainable Development) outlined the principles of sustainable development that all organizations involved in the organization of the Olympic Games must respect. The 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics were the first to go through the planning and implementation process with new environmental rules<sup>4-7</sup>. Modern sports infrastructure is a valuable legacy of mega sports events, the best example of which are Olympic parks. Sydney is one of the best examples of management of the Olympic legacy – the Olympic Park has been donated to city dwellers and tourists, and its development is based on the long-term, sustainable Master Plan 2030 strategy. The Olympic Games create new opportunities for city dwellers to be able to take part in their favourite sports competitions, use their leisure time for recreational activities, to have fun and take a much needed rest. There is no doubt, however, that these options are not always used in the right way<sup>8</sup> but usually the application itself for the rights to organize important sports events (event bidding) results in favorable changes in the modernization of sports and recreational infrastructure in accordance with the principles of respect for the natural environment. However, not only sports events favor urban regeneration. The example from Poland is worth mentioning - *Moje Boisko - Orlik 2012* - a governmental-local program, which aimed to build sports fields in each Polish commune by 2012 (in 2012 Poland and Ukraine were the organizers of the European Football Championship). In December 2012, the program was terminated. About 2,600 facilities were built in Poland over the course of five years, with the initial establishment of 2012 facilities. In the years 2008–2012, nearly PLN 1 billion was allocated from the state budget for this purpose. Within five years, a total of nearly 1,700 municipalities took advantage of the offer. Moreover, a growing number of post-industrial cities are utilizing sport initiatives to present an attractive image to potential tourists. However, the findings from English cities: Birmingham, Manchester, and Sheffield suggest that, although sport reimagining does exhibit some advantageous qualities, there are also significant problems associated with this mode of place marketing<sup>9</sup>. In Scotland sport has played a significant role in the urban regeneration<sup>10</sup>. Also some destinations for business, e.g. Singapore, are turning towards sports development and mega events to reinforce place promotion<sup>11</sup>. New urban environments have emerged in modern cities, dominated by spectacular spaces of consumption designed to attract tourists' and suburbanites' discretionary incomes<sup>12</sup>.

In the stadium architecture, the existing reference system was the Greek antiquity. In contemporary designs, however, there are no references to the classic achievements of antiquity and the source of inspiration are, among others, organic forms, microscopic photos of cells, the lack of verticality, balance and symmetry. An example is the Allianz Arena in Munich, prepared for the 2006 FIFA World Cup. An example of a pro-ecological approach in the construction of the stadium is the project of the Victoria Olympic Stadium in Stockholm – hidden in the earth embankments and green slopes from the outside and very well integrated into the surrounding landscape. Equally important is the pro-ecological and pro-sport development of areas in the immediate vicinity of new or revitalized stadiums (e.g. Wembley, Stade de France, Amsterdam Arena)<sup>13</sup>. An interesting example of a pro-ecological approach to sports infrastructure from Denmark (the town of Løgstør) is a low-budget, generally accessible, multifunctional, unheated sports hall that serves as a local sports field and a neighborhood center for physical activity. The roofed hall is open 24 hours a day and was built of cheap materials from which warehouse halls are built. It has a lightweight structure that can be quickly assembled. The facility was built in cooperation with the Danish Foundation for Culture and Sports Equipment. In the Netherlands, there is a visible trend of designing playgrounds not only for the youngest (additional possibility of integration among children, parents and grandparents). They are interestingly integrated into the local landscape. In the USA (Oregon) the creation of artificial playgrounds is being abandoned more and more often, and the emphasis is on the use of natural materials – wood, vegetation, stones, sand and water. In Canada, it is pointed out that children playing in completely safe playgrounds with soft surfaces are not able to assess the risk and behave in less safe conditions. Therefore, the aim is to ensure that the playgrounds are as close to the natural landscape as possible<sup>14</sup>. Municipal sports initiatives also help to combat discrimination among young people. The young people in the Sport for Development initiative in Belgium experience it as a space where they can be themselves, feel at home, gain respect, can learn to reflect and form opinions, and are temporarily freed from daily struggles such as discrimination<sup>15</sup>. In cities, roller skating, outdoor gym, skateboards, BMX bikes, scooters, parkour, slackline, kendama, waveboard, fishboard, frisbee are more and more popular, and the sports environmentally friendly infrastructure should keep up with these trends. Sports infrastructure is often characterized by interesting

design, ecological materials and care for the natural environment. Sports devices are more and more often treated as small works of urban art. Street sports are realized especially in dedicated skateparks – places of blooming subcultures<sup>16</sup>. Urban sport can also be a form of escape from the ghettoisation of immigrant communities. Modern sport is about defining space, playing with different orders, making internal differences, and contesting external boundaries<sup>17</sup>.

There are also a number of initiatives and events in cities to promote a healthy, active lifestyle - for example, the European Cycling Challenge, All Poland runs, Bike Challenge - a cycling race for amateurs promoting cycling as a sustainable and ecological way of transport, or Parkrun – joint running for everyone. Parkrun is an initiative that organizes free, weekly 5 km timed runs (every Saturday morning). It has grown on an international scale and promotes sport for everyone, regardless of their running experience, results, age, gender or social status. It has the potential to increase physical activity and promote health, especially among social groups with low economic status. Parkrun runs are held on almost all continents and bring together hundreds of thousands of amateur runners. Over the last few years, this initiative has grown from a small-time trial in Bushy Park, London, to a global social movement<sup>18</sup>. Recreation is very often combined with tourism – although this, performed outside of current duties, is most often undertaken to regenerate strength and manifests itself, among others, in non-professional sports activities or various forms of tourism. Among the many recreational alternatives, city dwellers more and more often use a bicycle - riding it is not only a relatively quick and cheap way to travel around the city, but also a popular form of spending free time. New cycle paths are constantly being created in cities to relieve the traditional ways of transport. The ‘Bicycle Snake’ in Copenhagen is an attractive bicycle path between buildings, along the waterfront and partly over the water. Also in other European cities, e.g. Poznan, interesting solutions for cyclists are created (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: solutions for cyclists in Poznan, Poland.



Source: personal collection.

In addition, contemporary architectural forms make it possible to combine cultural tourism with sports tourism - for example, you can enter the roof of the Oslo Opera House by bicycle, skateboard, roller skates (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: the roof of the Oslo Opera House, Norway



Source: personal collection.

On the Mill's Island in Bydgoszcz (Poland), we can admire the monuments from the perspective of a canoe – in the city, canoe routes are marked out in the revitalized areas with cultural attractions. Physical activity more and more often takes place on the streets with the use of architectural elements, small architecture, building fragments (roofs, handrails, stairs, walls, ramps, benches, etc.).

Recently, we have been observing the phenomenon of using suburban spaces. Metropolitan areas have become a meeting place based on outdoor recreation. An interesting example in Poland is the metropolitan area of Poznan, where all municipalities directly adjacent to the metropolitan city are considered to be its members. A metropolitan



area is a territorially coherent region. The inhabitants of this area live in the vicinity of the city of Poznan, most often they work there, but they live in the adjacent areas. The necessary sports and recreational infrastructure is also being built for them. There, their needs related to participation in universal sport and health promotion are met. The Tarnowo Podgorne commune, located in the metropolitan area of Poznan, is an important point on the sports map of Wielkopolska Voivodship and Poland. The largest municipal investment is Tarnowskie Termy – Water Park, in which there are indoor and outdoor recreational pools, sports pools, a sauna and a relaxation zone (see Figure 3 and 4). The most important advantage is thermal waters, the healing properties of which have been documented. There is a Fitness Club in the building of Tarnowskie Termy.

Figure 3: visualization of the Tarnowskie Termy in Tarnowo Podgorne, Poland.

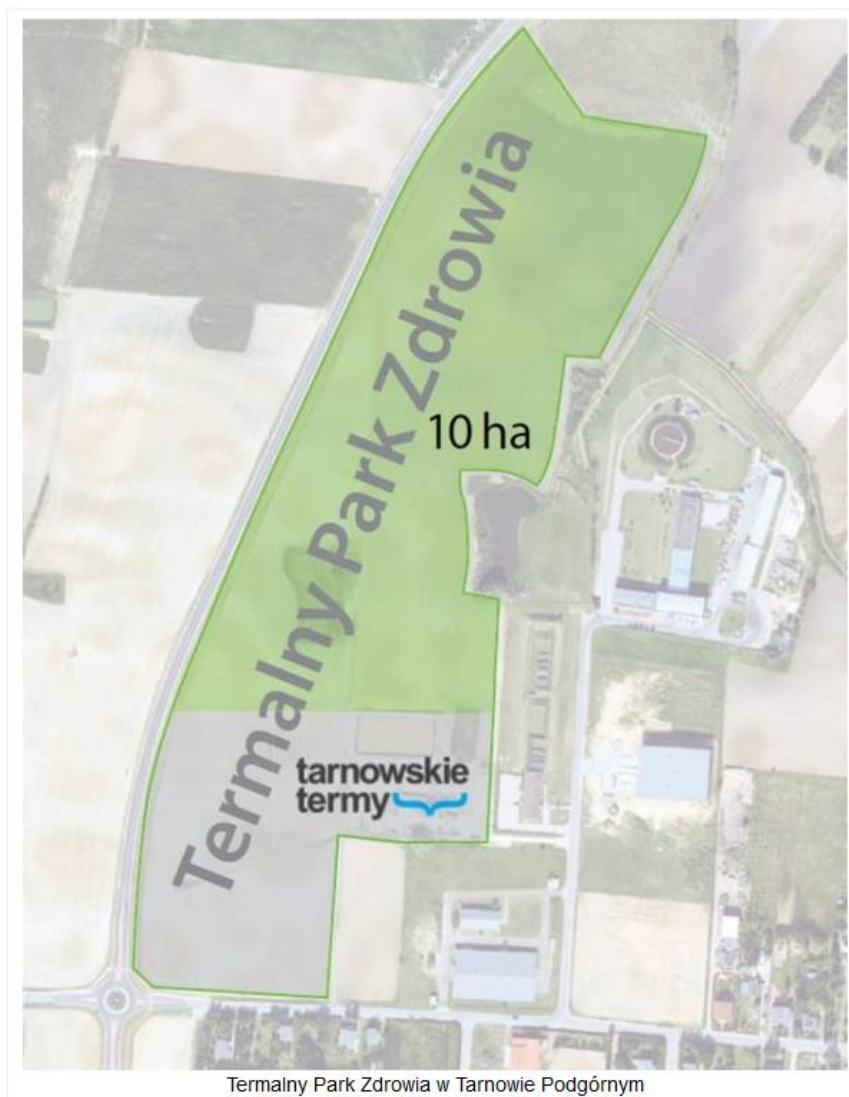


Available at: <https://kapitalpolski.pl/ambitna-strategia-termalna/>. Cited: 27 jul 2021.

The most important advantage is thermal waters, the healing properties of which have been documented. There is a Fitness Club in the building of Tarnowskie Termy.



Figure 4: visualization of the location of the Tarnowskie Termy in Tarnowo Podgorne, Poland.



Available at: <https://kapitalpolski.pl/ambitna-strategia-termalna/>. Cited: 27 jul 2021.

The Tarnowskie Termy Water Park is also the first element of an innovative idea - the creation of the Thermal Health Park (see Figure 5 and 6).

Figure 5: visualization of the Thermal Health Park in Tarnowo Podgorne, Poland.



Available at: <https://www.tarnowo-podgorne.pl/aktualnosci/powstana-teznie-solankowe-w-termalnym-parku-zdrowia-w-tarnowie-podgornym/>. Cited: 27 jul 2021.

Figure 6: visualization of the Thermal Health Park in Tarnowo Podgorne, Poland.



Available at: <https://www.tarnowo-podgorne.pl/aktualnosci/powstana-teznie-solankowe-w-termalnym-parku-zdrowia-w-tarnowie-podgornym/>. Cited: 27 jul 2021.

It will be a space dedicated to entities providing rehabilitation, modern cosmetics and SPA services. The investment plans include building a graduation tower. It will be an inspiration for further projects that use the healing properties of thermal water. For outdoor enthusiasts, this area has sports fields, outdoor gyms, playgrounds and skate

parks - they are created in each of the 16 municipalities. The bicycle paths described in the guidebook are becoming more and more popular, thus encouraging people to explore the area from the perspective of a bicycle. The beaches on Lake Lusowskie, located in the Protected Landscape Area, are also very popular, especially in the summer season. In summer, it is a frequently chosen place for swimming, but also for sports relaxation.

There are basketball, beach volleyball and table tennis courts. In other seasons of the year, it is a must-see on the walking and cycling map of the commune. On the other hand, well-equipped and prepared modern sports halls are the venue for sports events at various levels: from local to international. The Lion's Run is the largest open event, widely popularizing an active lifestyle. Every year, this event is attended by several thousand runners, their families and fans. In addition to the half marathon, there are also Lion Cubs Runs (for children of various age categories), a 10 km run (Chasing the Lion), the Generation Relay and an athletics meeting. Running enthusiasts can test their skills in other events: the EU Run, Rozalińska Trzynastka, Independence Run, and advanced - in the Lion Triathlon.

Contemporary cities are increasingly becoming destinations of transformative tourism too. Transformative tourism focuses on the self-reflection and self-discovery aspects of travel, and how we can incorporate the growth we've experienced on our trip into our day-to-day life back at home. Transformative travel is all about the personal growth travel inspires and cultivates. It takes experiential travel (authentic, local, culture-centric, off the beaten path experiences) to another level by incorporating lessons, exercises, coaching and other tools for self-development during and after the journey. Physical exercises can play a significant role in the spiritual development during this kind of leisure time spending. New yoga, spa & wellness centers are constantly being built in cities. The industry of mindfulness is developing fast. Joint yoga or tai-chi classes in parks (following the example of Asian countries) are enjoying a growing interest, also within mother groups popular especially in Australia (some mothers practice physical activity during active meetings, and some take care of their children then). Yoga marathons are organized – for example, Yoga Oysho (by the Oysho clothing company) or mass runs such as Business Run. Often, such initiatives are a part of corporate social responsibility strategies. A multitasking center are prepared – e.g. Bezogródek in Krakow – called urban jungle where citizens have space for yoga, relaxing etc. in the surroundings of palms,

sand and water. Cities take us not only to warm countries. Artificial climbing walls or ski slopes appear not only in affluent places, such as Dubai – Malta ski slope in Poland (Poznań) is one of such examples. More and more such artificial attractions also appear in modern shopping centers.

## **Summary**

Sports attractions attract tourists to cities, but in order to properly manage sports tourism and sports and recreational infrastructure in the city, it is necessary to have knowledge about sustainable development and contemporary eco-trends. The development of sport is also one of the elements thanks to which cities can become exemplary in terms of pro-social solutions. Contemporary mass sports events not only promote a healthy lifestyle of residents, but also improve the image of tourist regions. Socially responsible projects should be created and implemented, especially in neglected urban districts. Developing cities should learn how to activate the local environment in the field of sports lifestyle promotion and know how the process of regenerating the urban tissue as a result of organizing sports events or the process of revitalizing urban sports spaces is proceeding. Today, each of us can join initiatives that have a real impact on urban processes in terms of the development of physical activity of city residents and tourists. Nowadays, an important element of sustainable cities is sports space available to everyone – both residents and tourists. Supporting the physical activity of the inhabitants is not the only one necessary to put it into practice. Equally important are such areas of activities as promoting and organizing sports for children and youth, activities in efforts to acquire and international sports events, improving the level and professionalism of sports clubs, and creating sport as an identity element consistent with the city's image policy. In particular, we should draw on the experience of post-Olympic cities in the field of revitalization and gentrification processes, and work towards the metamorphosis of cities through the development of sports functions. In territorial self-governments it is necessary to understand the necessity of permanent improvement of municipal offers in the field of sports tourism in cooperation with representatives of other sports and tourism sectors, and to communicate with various communities for the benefit of social development through sport.

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