

4. Planning and Implementing the Principles

4.1 Recreation Setting Diversity

The primary basis of diversity in open space is the nature or type of landscape/s present (see Figure 4-1).

The widest possible recreation diversity and quality, through the provision of the greatest possible range of recreation settings should be the guiding principle.

Figure 4-1 - Range of recreation settings



These concepts are based on the notion that different people undertake different recreation activities in different settings (or landscapes). They obtain various experiences and varying degrees of satisfaction from combinations of activities and settings (Clark and Stankey, 1979). Refer to Appendix A (Recreation Opportunities) for an example of one activity in different settings.

Given that such a wide range of tastes and preferences exists in the community, the provision of a wide range of recreation settings will ensure more people find a recreation setting to match their recreational preference.

An ideal network of outdoor recreation settings would include some lineal corridors connected to larger blocks across the entire range of landscape classes (ie from urban-developed-modern to natural-wild-remote) that are present in a particular biogeographic region.

Open space areas that can be used for recreation include:

- lineal corridors (eg riparian or stream bank areas, cyclepaths, unformed gazetted roads, stock routes, etc);
- traditional formal and informal urban parks and gardens (eg botanical gardens, sports fields, etc);
- town squares, malls and city centre parks; and
- depending on the statutory obligations and policy constraints, areas in various public or Crown land tenures (eg. State Forests, Camping and Water Reserves, Scenic Reserves, Sport and Recreation Reserves, dam precincts, water catchment areas, National Parks, Conservation Parks, etc).

The open space system should range from natural to developed landscapes or settings. Landscape or recreation setting diversity (see Figure 4-1) is the basis of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and related or derived recreation planning and management concepts such as Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) and Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP). References on these concepts are provided. Figure 4 - 2 over the page illustrates recreation setting diversity of parkland.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum is a recreation management concept that systematically describes recreation settings in terms of their biophysical, social and managerial attributes. Refer to Appendix A (Recreation Settings) for explanations of these terms.

Recreation quality does not depend on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum/Landscape Classification. High or poor quality recreation experiences are equally possible in both developed-urban-modern settings and undeveloped-natural-wild-remote settings. Undeveloped-natural-wild-remote areas are not inherently better than developed-urban-modern areas. However, they are different.

The tenure and management arrangements applied to particular areas can be used to create more setting diversity and to provide more recreational satisfaction by segregating incompatible recreation activities and zoning some areas for specific types of activities.

Throughout Queensland and in Australia and overseas, setting diversity has been reduced by recreation succession. Recreation succession is the process by which the quality or condition of recreation settings deteriorate and/or change as a consequence of the impacts of recreational use and/or the actions of management. This is the main outdoor recreation issue, especially in high growth areas of the State where the demand for outdoor recreation is high.

The result of recreation succession is that particular recreation activities or particular styles of recreation activities are displaced from where they once occurred. This has less significance while suitable new sites are available, but for activities in some areas (eg trail bike riding near major urban centres), the supply of new sites is already exhausted. In effect, recreation opportunities (ie the opportunity to undertake a particular recreation activity in a particular recreation setting) are lost through recreation succession. Refer to Appendix A for more explanation.

4.2 Implementing Recreation Setting Diversity

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues

Recreation settings are the physical, managerial and socio-cultural features that define a particular open space area.

Recreation setting diversity needs to be considered at two levels:

- Regional/local government wide - to incorporate all landscape types in the public open space network. *Example: a range from developed sports fields in urban areas to naturally vegetated ridges and cliff lines.*
- Site planning - to plan public open space to provide a range of settings within a site. *Example: a district park with a wide vegetated riparian corridor on one boundary, a bush picnic area adjacent, a sport field on another boundary and playgrounds and informal open areas elsewhere.*

Figure 4-2 Recreation setting diversity



The key issues for recreation and sport are:

- Diversity can be provided in terms of both:
 - degree of naturalness; and
 - the biophysical attributes of a place (eg coastline or mountains, sand dunes or mangroves, rainforest, open forest or grassland; desert or swamp etc).
- Recreation settings are not static, many of the determining factors/ values are subject to change and modification.
- Changes to recreation setting diversity should be sensitive to long term changing community values and needs but resistant to short term trends, particularly those with irreversible consequences and those that require large areas of land or water.
- A good Geographic Information System (GIS) can map the areas and record the values associated with each site and help conceptualise recreation setting diversity. This can provide necessary detail and strategic context for planning scheme implementation.

Related Principles:

- Natural Landscape Features
- Regionally Significant Open Space
- Compatible Recreation Activities
- Undeveloped Open Space
- Recreation and Adjacent Land Use
- Open Space Standards/ Planning Performance Criteria.

Implementation Measures:

1. Change the mix of uses available on existing open space areas either by changing physical or managerial access restrictions. *Example: floodlighting a local park can provide for managed nocturnal use and increase the diversity of opportunities at the site level.*
2. Provide new opportunities in under used open space areas. *Example: walking trails through cemeteries.*
3. Consider how other public land tenures (eg. transport corridors, conservation, post-extractive industry) could be used for complementary recreation activities. *Example: a former quarry becomes a climbing site.*
4. Negotiate with other landowners for access or use of land on the basis of a lease or similar temporary tenure.
5. Prepare a master plan for a park area to guide development of more diversity within the park itself. *Example: a plan might identify a community need such as a BMX bike circuit and then look for locations within a park area where such a need could be met.*
6. Partnerships with commercial/ private enterprise providers or other agencies can expand the range of opportunities through allowing commercial elements to support outdoor recreation opportunities. *Example: management of a skatepark might be enhanced through a sales/hire/repair/training franchise that enhances site management through on site supervision.*
7. Encouraging commercial recreation proposals. *Example: Use planning processes to set policies and guidelines that make it easier for appropriate commercial recreation proposals to come forward for consideration. Similarly well written guidelines will discourage inappropriate commercial proposals.*

Case studies and examples relevant to this principle are:

Rafting Ground Reserve Master Plan
Local Area Open Space Plans
Ipswich Canoe Trail
Park Planning Performance Criteria

4.3 Natural Landscape Features

Prominent or significant natural landscape features are often the focus of recreation interests. These features can include mountain peaks, cave systems, gorges, coastlines, foreshores, remnant native vegetation, waterholes, wetlands and cliff lines.

Prominent natural landscape features should be identified, protected and managed for their recreational, nature conservation, historical, visual, educational and cultural heritage values.

Regional context should be considered in making wise planning decisions about prominent natural landscape features. A regional context provides a framework in which to identify the significance of local natural landscape features. For example, the Glasshouse Mountains north of Brisbane, are recognised as having national significance. Regional context for recreation can be evaluated by considering factors such as the:

- rarity of the feature;
- size or scale of the feature;
- access to the feature;
- significance for recreation, nature conservation, scenic amenity, education, history, and cultural heritage;
- types of outdoor recreation that could occur without reducing the underlying natural and cultural values; and
- number and places-of-origin of people who would participate in those activities.

State government departments often manage the land on which these features occur. The following example recommendations for escarpments and wetlands can generally be applied to other natural landscape features, to guide their use and management for recreation purposes.

- The recreation value of a natural landscape feature can be reduced by uncontrolled and/or inappropriate recreation use. Consequently, recreation should be actively managed to minimise unacceptable impacts and ensure the quality of the resource is maintained. Some natural landscape features may need the specific statutory protection provided by tenures such as National Park or State Forest, or by zonings which restrict development.
- Coordinated and collaborative planning by land owners to develop land management agreements for land to be used for recreation purposes.
- Land required for recreation access to inland watercourses, lakes, lagoons and tidal waters, should be publicly owned to ensure legal public access to these features. The options include:
 - reservation as some form of public land (Reserve for Community Purposes under the Land Act 1994 or Conservation Park under the Nature Conservation Act 1992);
 - easements; and
 - contractual arrangements with private landholders.
- An escarpment is sensitive to disturbances due to its steep slope and is usually of high scenic importance because of its dominant position in the landscape. Controlled access to minimise impact, but allowing compatible outdoor recreation pursuits enhances the diversity of recreation settings available to the community. Clear statements indicating what forms of development are acceptable also assist in the management and sustainability of these features.
- Wetlands are areas of swamp, shallow water or water logged land, vegetated by plants requiring moist soil or periodic flooding. Wetlands are important habitats for native plants and animals. Types of recreation activities, which can occur in wetland areas, include birdwatching, swimming, canoeing, hunting, nature study, fishing.

Management Plans developed by public land owners can address potential issues and conflicting usage of natural landscape areas and ensure their sustainability. Conflicting usage includes recreation usage of sensitive wetlands or coastline areas, inappropriate development on foreshores or escarpments. Clear statements indicating what forms of development are acceptable also assist in the management and sustainability of these features.

Management Plans for state lands (eg National Parks and State Forests) usually address recreation. Local government planning processes and outcomes should integrate with the management planning processes for state lands on which recreation opportunities are provided and/or recreation demands are focussed.

4.4 Implementing Natural Landscape Features

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

The key issues for recreation and sport are:

- Natural landscape features can contribute to the diversity of recreation opportunities through provision of settings and to the enhanced amenity of adjacent recreation areas. *Example: a forested hillslope in a national park may provide a scenic backdrop for a regional park.*
- Natural landscape features such as forested ridges and naturally vegetated watercourses can provide linkages between open space areas, corridors for path networks and buffers between land uses such as sporting fields and adjacent residential areas. *Example: a pathway or bikeway along a creek which links two parks.*
- The natural and cultural heritage values of landscape features can provide for education and recreation opportunities through interpretive activities both on and offsite. *Example: interpretative signage or curriculum-based school activities relating to a landscape feature (geology, history etc).*
- Protection of significant natural landscape features can constrain development in certain areas and therefore requires consideration in the preparation of the planning scheme to ensure management of development is guided appropriately. *Example: consideration of a development in the foreground of a significant regional lookout.*

Note: There are significant similarities, in implementation, with the planning principle Regionally Significant Open Space. Particular reference is made to the case study *Regional Landscape Values-Guidelines for their Protection*.

Related Principles:

- Recreation Setting Diversity
- Undeveloped Open Space
- Regionally Significant Open Space
- Waterways and Riparian Corridors
- Tourism and Outdoor Recreation.

Implementation Measures:

1. The most important issue for local government is the preparation of a well-mapped and documented study that identifies key features and their values. An Open Space Study may be the most effective mechanism.
2. For council owned or managed parkland, management plans should recognise and propose actions that protect important landscape features. *Example: a management plan for a park that recognises an avenue of historically important trees, and proposes actions to protect this feature within the overall management of the park.*

3. Agreements with private landowners could provide access to landscape features.
Example: an agreement for a recreational trail across grazing land to access a mountaintop.
4. Council can establish a Local Law/ Local Law Policy to manage organised or commercial recreation activity in council managed natural areas. *Example: a policy to manage climbing concessions on publicly-owned cliff faces.*

Case studies and examples relevant to this principle are:

Regional Landscape Values- Guidelines for their Protection
Local Area Open Space Plans

4.5 Sustainability of Recreation

In its most basic form, the principle of sustainable development means ensuring the quality and quantity of a resource is maintained for future use. The sustainable use concept applies to all human activities or land uses - including recreation. It also has economic, social and environmental/ecological dimensions which are interactive and interdependent.

For recreation, sustainability means a given stock of resources (eg areas which are available for recreation and sport, recreation trail corridors, built recreation or sport facilities, recreation and sport service providers, etc) maintains its quality, quantity and diversity.

For recreation dependent on access to open space land or water, sustainability has particular relevance. As the proportion of the landscape which is open space (refer to the definition in Appendix A) is reduced through urban and industrial expansion, the value or significance of the remaining/residual open space areas for all potential open space uses or functions increases. Typically, as the supply of the basic resource for open-space-dependent-recreation or sport (ie somewhere both suitable and accessible to do it) declines, the demands for these types of activities increase.

The long-term result is a loss of both recreation quality and diversity. This becomes more important when broadening the planning perspective from a local scale to a regional scale. If the range of recreation settings is restricted at a local scale, there is little hope of delivering a high quality and diverse regional network.

For outdoor recreation that generates a range of ecological, social and economic impacts, ecological sustainability is essential to maintain the quality, quantity and diversity of recreation settings.

Ecologically sustainable recreation can be defined as the use of areas/settings for recreation purposes both:

- within the capacity of those areas/settings to sustain natural processes; and
- so that the benefit of the use to the present generation does not diminish the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.

There are very few, if any, substitutes for the resource which supports outdoor recreation (ie open space). The demand for outdoor recreation is significant and outdoor recreation is a significant aspect of the quality of life in Queensland (1997 SEQ Outdoor Recreation Demand Study). Growing participation in outdoor recreation and the impacts of outdoor recreation activities have coincided with increasing interest in, and concern for, the natural environment and its long term protection.



The provision of a diverse range of recreation opportunities (ie specific combinations of recreation activities and settings) ensures the flexibility necessary to mitigate changes or disturbances brought about by social, technological or environmental changes (McIntyre, 1993). To maximise the quality and diversity of recreation choices available to a community, McIntyre identifies a need to maintain the integrity and character of recreation opportunity classes or settings. This is closely aligned with the concept of “sustainable use”. Sustainable recreation use of open space will become increasingly difficult as growth in activities dependent on open space continues.

There is no doubt that pursuing recreation and nature conservation goals concurrently at the same site can result in conflict. In some cases, recreational use can so severely degrade an area that the environment is damaged and the quality of the recreational setting itself is diminished (Cole, 1993, p.105). Consequently, the quality of recreation experiences can decrease (at least for some people).

However, while conflict between recreation and nature conservation objectives is possible, it is not unavoidable.

The relationship between the natural environment and recreation activities is fundamental. The quality and diversity of recreation opportunities in the more natural open space environments is dependent on sustaining the natural quality and diversity of these environments.

Therefore, careful management of the natural environment is a primary goal of outdoor recreation. If recreation occurs without regard for the environments or settings in which it occurs, irreversible damage may result. Recreation succession, consequent displacement of recreational users and loss of recreational choice results.

Sustainability in the recreation context relates to whether an activity can be undertaken without unmanageable impacts. An activity is unsustainable if, after applying normal management standards to the activity, unplanned impacts are detectable, persistent and increasing.

4.6 Implementing Sustainability of Recreation

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

The key issues for recreation and sport are:

- Protecting the recreation resource from adverse impacts created by overuse, inappropriate use or adjacent uses. *Examples: a creekbank at a popular swimming hole trampled by overuse; a quiet bushland park compromised by an adjacent noisy extractive industry.*
- Managing impacts on the recreation experience so that it is not diminished or modified to the extent it ceases to provide the same quality and type of experience. *Example: a wilderness experience compromised by crowding, littering, site trampling etc.*
- Considering the need to constrain use of areas, type of activities, timing of activities and infrastructure provided. *Example: closing four wheel drive tracks in North Queensland’s wet season.*
- Sustainability and the need to sometimes restrict access to a resource or opportunity can sometimes be at odds with principles of social equity. *Example: access to some remote wilderness sites is limited, by its very nature, to those who are able bodied and experienced enough.*

In many ways the provision of sustainable recreation opportunities is achieved more effectively through non-scheme measures. The planning scheme has a major function to plan land use and manage development. However it is management of activity and facility development that is crucial in ensuring sustainability of recreation.

Planning schemes should consider the compatibility of adjacent land uses and the possible use of buffering to separate incompatible uses. Use planning schemes to identify and avoid potential conflicts, and thus reduce the need for reactive management.

Related Principles:

- Multiple Uses of Open Space
- Waterways and Riparian Corridors
- Open Space Fragmentation/ Connectivity of Recreation Areas
- Recreation Setting Diversity
- Recreation and Adjacent Land Uses
- Open Space Standards/Performance Criteria.

Implementation Measures:

1. Management Plans for council owned or managed land can be prepared to manage uses, and levels of development. Management Plans can also identify the factors or issues needing consideration in any proposal for use or development.
2. The network of parks and sporting fields can be classified into a range of park types or management categories. Using local laws and general management policy a council can manage the uses appropriate to a particular type of park. *Example: a park classified as an urban bushland park could restrict activities that would be acceptable in a local recreation park, like walking the dog (see Figure 4-3 over the page).*
3. Monitoring is an important component of sustainability. Look for “early warning” indicators that identify problems before they become irreversible. *Example: profiling mountain bike tracks to gauge the extent of erosion and then using this information to forecast trends and identify remedial action.*

Case Studies and Examples relevant to this Principle:

Green Island
Park Planning Performance Criteria
Rafting Ground Reserve

4.7 Undeveloped Open Space

Undeveloped open space refers to natural, or near-natural land with no or little development (such as clearing of natural vegetation, roads, or residential, industrial, commercial, agricultural settlement). The identification, protection and management of natural or near natural landscape may:

- enhance the livability of an area;
- contribute to the conservation of biological diversity including the conservation of wildlife habitats and corridors, and the maintenance of natural fauna habitats and corridors, and the maintenance of natural ecosystems which sustain life;
- support agriculture by protecting ground water catchments, providing shelter belts for stock and preventing salination of soil downslope;
- provide water for human use;
- provide landscape/scenic diversity;
- provide appropriate settings for some outdoor recreation activities and outdoor education opportunities; and
- provide opportunities for protection of culturally significant sites.



Figure 4-3 - Example of Activity Management for Different Park Types using a Matrix Approach

Possible Activities	Park Type						
	Local Park	Local sport	Local bush/creek	District Park	District sport/mixed use	District Bushland	District Bush-High conservation
Low impact (walking, nature appreciation)	P	P	P	P	P	P	C
Dogs on leash	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Dogs off leash	C	C	N	C	C	N	N
Picnic facilities	Y	Y	N	P	P	P	C, S
Playgrounds	P	Y	N	P	Y	N	N
Toilets	N	Y	N	P	P	Y	Y, S
Large groups	N	Y	N	P	P	Y	N
Informal active/social sport	Y	P	N	P	P	N	N
Formal/organised sport and other activities	N	Y	N	Y	P	N	N
Youth facilities	Y	Y	N	P	Y	N	N
Bikepaths	Y	Y	Y	P	P	Y	N
Walking tracks/bush walks	Y	N	P	Y	Y	P	C
Camping	N	N	N	N	N	Y	C
Mountain Bikes	N	N	N	N	Y	C	N
Horse Trails	N	N	Y	C	N	C	N
Water based activity	S	S	S	S	S	S	N
Trail bikes	N	N	N	N	Y, C, S	C, S	N

P – Usually provided for as standard development of park

Y – Yes activity is allowable but may not be provided for

N – No activity is not normally provided for and may be prohibited

C – Controlled activity that may be allowed where special provisions are made

S – Subject to site specific factors such as water quality or other environmental factors.

4.8 Implementing Undeveloped Open Space

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

Undeveloped Open Space means land in a natural or near-natural state with little or no development.

The key issues for sport and recreation are:

- Undeveloped Open Space contributes to a diversity of landscapes and recreation settings, providing relief from urban development and often buffering between areas of recreational use and other development.
- Land set aside for future recreation and sporting use can also have a temporary role as undeveloped open space until increased demand requires development for recreational use. This can provide a cost effective way of managing land set aside for future recreation development as natural areas cost less to maintain than developed parks.

Undeveloped Open Space includes land that will always remain undeveloped such as natural landscape features and waterways, and land that is held for a future use such as development for a public park.

For open space held for future use, the land's intended use needs to be identified so that the community's expectations are realistic.

Undeveloped Open Space identified for future public recreation purposes should be managed to ensure its recreational values are not compromised by inappropriate development.

Related Principles:

- Natural Landscape Features
- Regionally Significant Open Space
- Waterways and Riparian Corridors.

Implementation Measures:

1. Larger areas of undeveloped open space in public control will require management plans and/or vegetation management plans, particularly in regard to risk issues such as fire, erosion, pests and inappropriate use or access. Management plans can also incorporate measures to reduce maintenance costs.
2. Agreements with private landowners can be used to protect parcels of undeveloped land with particular open space value. In some cases this may require return benefits *Example: reduced rates or special development agreements which can maintain the net yield from a site.*
3. Where land is kept for future recreation or sporting use managing the site as a "bush block" is more cost effective than developing it as park before demand has required the supply. However there are dangers inherent in community perception that the land will always remain as a "bush block". In some cases it may be desirable to ensure the community has a clear understanding of the future use of the land. *Example: signage indicating the site's status as future sporting fields.* The same issues apply where undeveloped open space has been kept for a future school, community facility or a future transport corridor.
4. Similarly to (3) Undeveloped Open Space may be cleared land and have informal use as a recreational space by the surrounding community. It is important the community is aware of the temporary nature of this use.
5. Unallocated State Land (USL) can also be a source of undeveloped open space or future parkland. It is important that if any USL is identified in open space planning (as future park) that the relevant state agency is advised of the council's desire.

Case studies and examples relevant to this principle are:

Local Area Open Space Plans
Park Planning Performance Criteria

4.9 Recreation and Sport in Rural Areas

The necessity and usefulness of identifying, developing and managing public open space in rural areas, especially in sparsely populated and/or remote rural areas, may seem questionable as there is an obvious abundance of open space.

Public open space in rural areas can support tourism and protect key natural and historic features that define the identity of communities, promote social cohesion and meet recreation and sport needs.

The critical questions concerning recreation and sport in rural open space are:

- is the open space legally accessible to residents and visitors?;
- does the available legally accessible open space meet the recreation and sport needs of the community and of visitors now and in the future?; and
- are key open space sites adequately managed and protected or are they deteriorating?

Like city dwellers, rural people also require access to public open space for recreation and sport, regardless of the size of their landholdings. This is because some recreation needs (for example long distance horse trails, places for people to meet informally, defined legal routes for people to explore the landscape and public access to swimming holes and large water storages, etc) cannot be met on individual properties. Public open space in rural areas may also have a potential role in regional recreation or tourism for urban residents.

Depending on the attributes and values of a particular area, public open space in rural areas could be designed and actively managed to:

- provide access to attractive landscape and/or historic features which define community identity such as scenic lookouts, cliffs, gorges, historic buildings, etc (refer to the section on Natural Landscape Features);
- provide non-motorised recreation corridors allowing exploration of the landscape by horse, bicycle or foot without the dangers associated with using formed roads with fast moving motorised traffic;
- contribute positively to economic activity and diversity by providing opportunities for tourism (eg caravan parks and camping areas can be linked by horse trails or walking tracks to swimming holes, fishing spots or scenic look outs); and
- provide for stock movement, water supply, water catchment management, protection of scenic features, grazing and nature conservation.

By adopting a multiple use approach where possible and practical, the benefits a rural community can gain from public open space are maximised.

As in cities and towns, public open space in rural areas needs to:

- be accessible from logical and convenient locations;
- provide for the likely movement pattern of people within the area (given the terrain, the location of facilities - shops, toilets, drinking water supplies, shade, formed trails, horse yards, cyclepaths, etc)
- be cognisant of the location of natural and historic/cultural features; and
- be actively managed to maintain the quality of sites and facilities.

Appropriately designed and actively managed public open space networks can provide a focus for community recreation and sport activities. They can also promote community identity and cohesiveness. Figure 4-4 over the page illustrates a range of activities which can occur in rural areas.

Public open space networks in rural areas can include:

- stock routes;
- camping and water reserves;
- sport and recreation reserves;
- scenic reserves;
- land from developer contributions;
- cemeteries;
- municipal parks and gardens;
- roadside rest areas
- public halls (providing facilities associated with open space usage);
- unformed roads;
- disused quarries;
- utility easements;
- weirs and dams;
- show grounds; and
- esplanades.

However, recreational use of public open space may impact upon neighbouring, surrounding or nearby rural enterprises. In some rural communities, this is a major issue. The public open space system should be designed and managed to alleviate, rather than increase these problems.

Public open space corridors that are separate from the road system, clearly identified and actively managed, can help reduce trespass on private property by people seeking access to significant historic or landscape features.

The identification, protection and active management of these corridors to ensure that connectivity, networks and diversity are maintained is recommended.

4.10 Implementing Recreation and Sport in Rural Areas

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

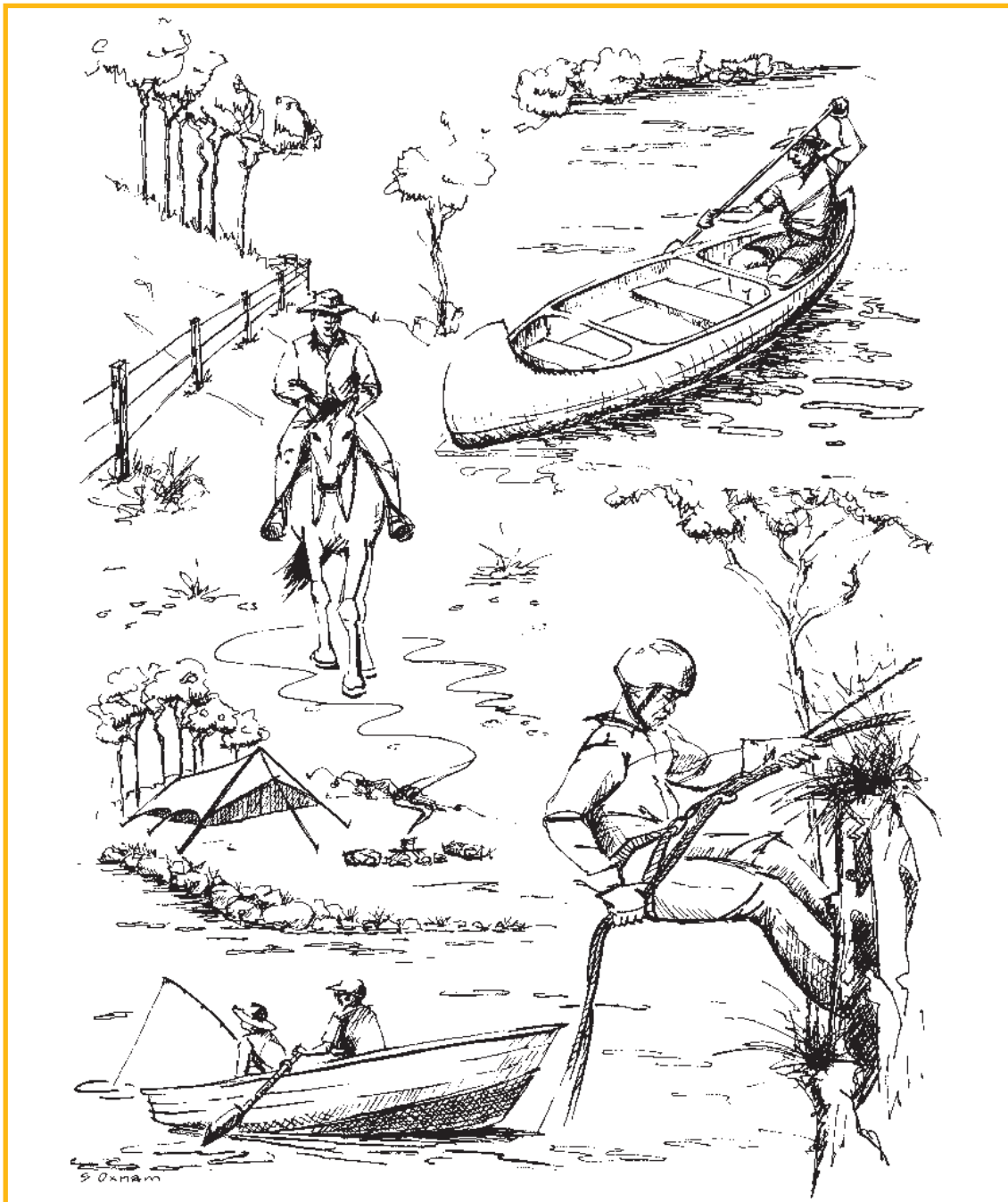
In many cases the most effective approach is multiple use of areas for formal activities that complement the other more informal (often landscape based) opportunities. In addition recreational preferences in rural and remote areas may require greater consideration of providing more space (or access to space) for a range of outdoor activities including equestrian sports, shooting sports, long distance trails, access to rivers and waterholes.

This planning principle is about the differences in planning and provision for rural areas, so most of the measures in other principles apply. In many ways planning schemes can have limited value as their focus is on land use planning and managing development. In many rural and remote local governments there is little development or change to existing land uses.

The limited resources available for preparation of open space or other strategic plans is acknowledged. However the inclusion of important open space elements (such as main sporting fields or river corridors) in a planning scheme can assist in developing a strategic approach to recreation and sport provision and protecting existing opportunities.



Figure 4-4 Recreation and sport in rural areas



In many cases demand for additional land will be low or non-existent, rather, meeting community needs is about redeveloping existing facilities and open spaces or improving existing resources. Negotiations and agreements for community access to existing resources and enhancement of public recreation land can ensure a diverse range of recreation opportunities are provided.

The key issues for recreation and sport are:

- Encouragement to provide open space at the “township” level and at local government wide/regional levels.
- The benefit in providing a focus area for the local community for social activity. *Example: a sports facility that also provides a venue for community fundraising activities or special events.*
- The use of parks and open space to enhance the visual appeal of towns. *Example: well maintained landscaped parks can enhance the main streets and provide an entry statement.*
- Councils should be careful that provision of new land or facilities does not place an unsustainable financial burden on the community.
- State agencies, rural and remote local governments and the community need to work in partnership and must support planning for multiple uses of open space. The partnership approach extends to regional planning and delivery of services. *Example: shared use with schools is often an efficient solution to demand for developed sporting fields or facilities.*
- Capital funding remains a significant issue and although there are state and federal grants programs to assist, the success of any applications usually relies on support from a strategic recreation plan or facilities plan.
- Some shires may have several small and remote communities. The travel distance to any other community is a significant barrier. A minimum level of provision, based on current and future population, community need and the range of opportunity currently available, should be sought for all communities.
- In some growth local governments there may be significant demand for “rural residential” land and population growth in rural areas adjacent to the main urban areas. Rural communities anticipate a similar level of provision as adjacent areas and their demand for sporting and recreational parks and facilities is as significant as it is for urban areas. It is incorrect to assume that because they have large properties they do not need (or want) access to local and district parks and sporting fields. Planning for recreation and sport necessitates the provision of public space for all communities.

Related Principles:

All of the other planning principles are relevant to Recreation and Sport in Rural Areas.

Implementation Measures:

1. In developing recreation and sport strategies, think creatively about the range of partnership approaches that might be available to deliver services. Possible partners could include Queensland government agencies (eg. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, local schools), adjoining local governments, local community and sporting groups, significant regional employers (eg. mining companies).
2. Planning for public open space should include areas of social and cultural significance (including local history) such as historic sites, memorials and sites of significance to aboriginal communities associated with the local government. Planning must consider the potential for recreational use to cause impacts on the significant site and how these impacts might be managed.



3. Good site and development planning applies equally in rural areas as it does in urban areas. Consideration of pedestrian and vehicle access, linkages with other community facilities, linkages with other open space (such as river beds), size and shape which allows multiple uses, need for horse or stock considerations, fire and other hazard management, provision of or proximity to appropriate facilities (eg. toilets).
4. At least one area of informal parkland developed for picnic, play and informal gatherings should be provided in a township. Design considerations should include the provision of shade and water as well as the needs of parents with young children (eg. road safety, toilets, visibility etc). A town park also has benefit for travellers. Providing the town park as an integral part of the “main street” means the town’s image is enhanced, travellers are accommodated and the local economy can benefit from traveller’s spending.
5. In some communities it will be appropriate to plan for and manage public open space areas with a strong significance for Indigenous culture. This may include requirements for restriction of public access at certain times or (for cultural reasons) to certain groups. No planning of a site or for management of a site should take place without the involvement of appropriate representatives of local Indigenous groups (or if possible Indigenous representative groups should be supported in preparing the plan).⁸
6. Locating and developing a site for difficult to locate sports (eg. shooting, motor sports) should consider the need for substantial buffering (in terms of distance and physical buffers for visual and noise purposes) of such areas and opportunities for sharing between local governments.

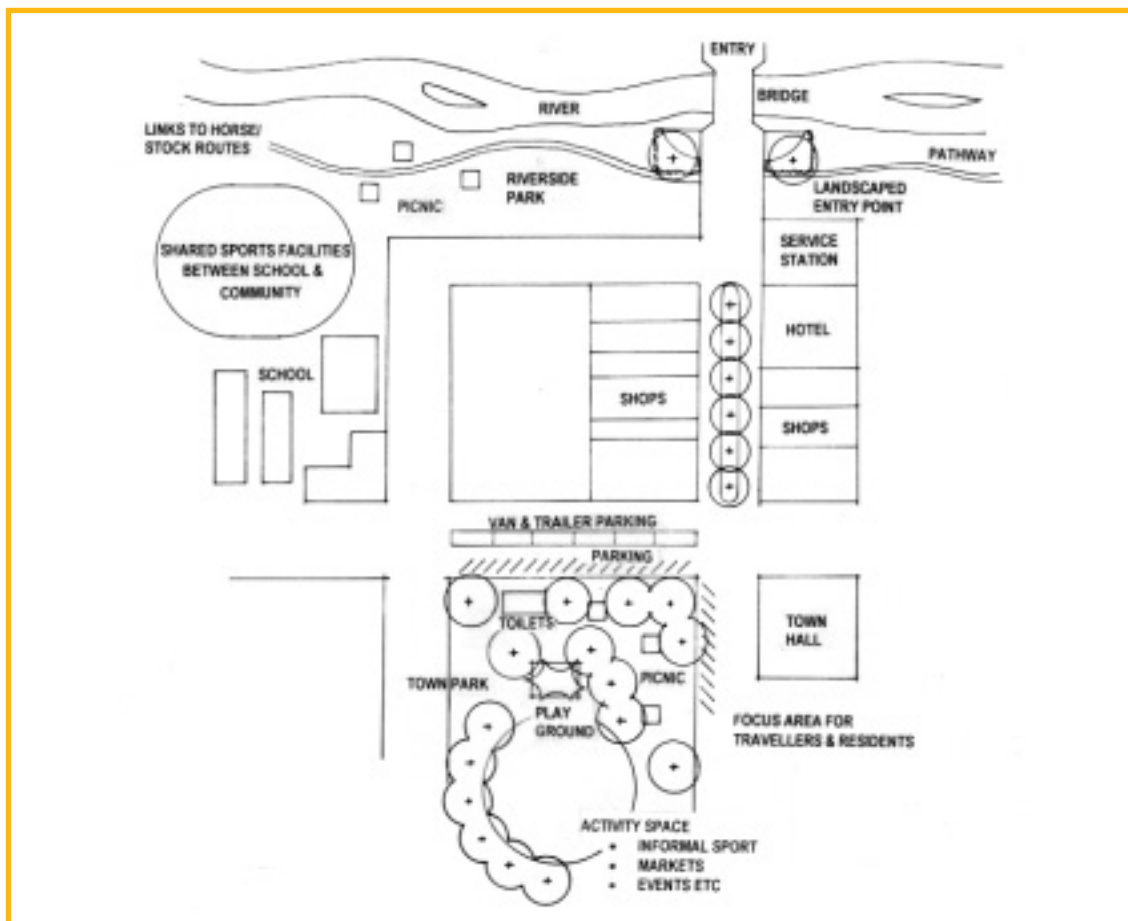
Case studies and examples relevant to this principle are:

Lake Belmore, Croydon Shire

Figure 4-5 over the page illustrates an example concept plan for open space in a rural town.

⁸ Native title and Indigenous issues are referred to in Chapter 2.

Figure 4-5 Example concept plan for parks and open space in a rural town⁹



The concept above demonstrates:

- Centrally located, multi-use area as a “town park”.
- Co-location of park and other facilities for residents and travellers such as shops, toilets, Playgrounds, community event space.
- Shared use facilities for sports serving community and school.
- Use of existing open space corridors (river) and pathway linkages to other trails (eg. stock routes, historical trails etc).
- Use of landscaped park and open space to enhance the town’s appearance.

⁹ Illustration courtesy of Siteplan Cairns



4.11 Open Space Fragmentation and Connectivity of Recreation Areas

4.11.1 Open Space Fragmentation

Outdoor recreation is dependent on access to appropriate open space areas. Where possible, fragmenting and/or isolating open space should be avoided to ensure the continuity of public enjoyment of existing open space, and to ensure sufficient area and diversity of open space remains for future generations. Local government planning schemes can play a key role in preventing open space fragmentation.

All open space functions (recreation, nature conservation, water catchment management, maintenance of scenic quality and diversity, protection and presentation of cultural and natural heritage) are compromised by reductions in the area and connectivity of open space.

Open space can be fragmented:

- through new residential, commercial or industrial development;
- when open space corridors are used as major transport and utility corridors; and
- when public access to open space is restricted or prevented where it was previously allowed.

Fragmentation may have a negative impact on the scenic, nature conservation and water catchment values of open space and may reduce the diversity of local and regional recreational environments.

In designing open space generally:

- larger areas are preferable to smaller areas, depending on the intended use;
- rounder, compact areas are preferable to elongated or irregular areas, except in cases where linear open space forms links between larger areas of open space;
- open space areas located close together are preferable to widely separated open space areas;
- linked open space areas are preferable to isolated open space areas; and
- in cities and towns, open space located near public transport systems, activity centres and residential areas is preferable to open space which is distant from all three.

However, there will be exceptions to these principles, such as preservation of smaller areas of significant landscape, which provide links to open space corridors.

The terms “alienation” and “fragmentation” are often used interchangeably. However, in the administration of state land in Queensland, “alienation” means the transfer of ownership from the State. Alienation occurs through the:

- sale or transfer of public land to private ownership; and
- granting of leases over public land allowing exclusive use for particular purposes.

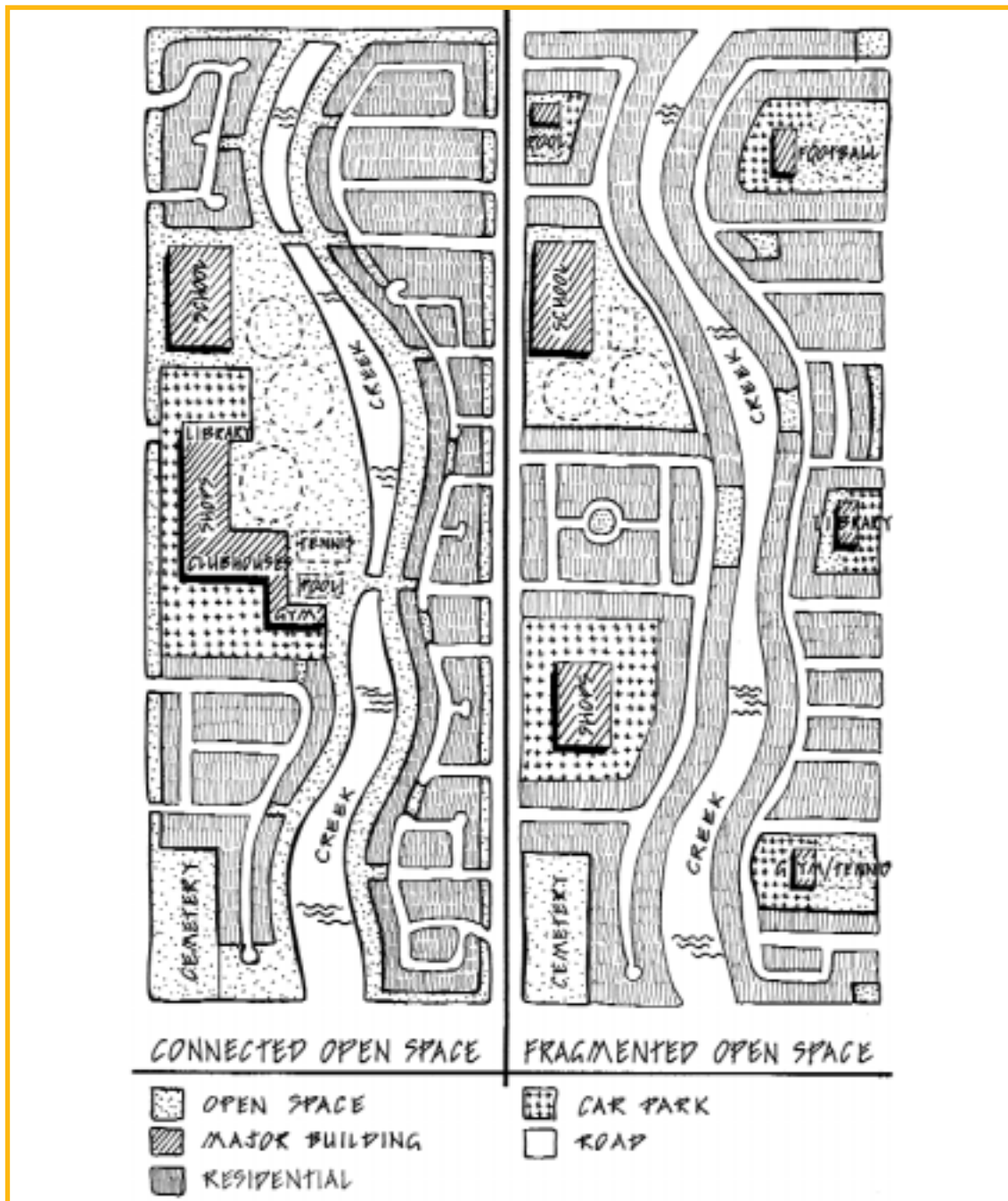
Decisions regarding the alienation of land and administration of transfer of ownership of state land are the responsibility of the Queensland Department of Natural Resources.

Figure 4-6 over the page illustrates connected and fragmented open space.

4.11.2 Connectivity of Recreation Areas

The development and maintenance of connections between transport systems, centres of population and recreation and sport resources (eg open space, sports facilities) helps to create coherent and integrated communities both socially and physically. Communities with activity centres that draw people together, public open spaces for communal recreation and social activity, and recreation centres that provide a mix of compatible and complementary activities, provide focus and contribute to a sense of community.

Figure 4-6 Open space fragmentation



Designing and maintaining connectivity of open space will maximise the value of the open space network for all uses/functions (eg nature conservation, water catchment, etc) not just recreation and sport. Providing the physical connections between areas ensures maximum utility, enhances opportunities to participate, and encourages integration between neighbourhoods and the efficient use of community resources.

The following methods can be used to establish and maintain connections between transport systems and ensure communities are interactive.

- Facilities and open space, which are served by public and private transport, and linked to residential areas by pedestrian paths and cyclepaths (refer to Non-Motorised Recreation Trail Network).
- Road systems which are designed to focus on major destinations, such as schools, shopping and community centres, recreational areas and transport interchanges.
- Open space corridors, which are for multiple uses, including non-motorised recreation opportunities such as walking, cycling and horse riding.

Other relevant information and discussion of issues relating to connectivity are dealt with in the sections:

- Open Space Fragmentation
- Non-Motorised Recreation Trail Network
- Co-Location of Facilities

4.12 Implementing Open Space Fragmentation and Connectivity of Recreation Areas

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

Small fragmented areas of open space are usually more costly to maintain, susceptible to degradation, and limited in their ability to respond to changing community needs or provide diverse recreation opportunities.

Planning for parks of sufficient size along with a well connected open space network which links open space areas and community access networks, will ensure more efficient management and a more diverse and accessible range of recreation opportunities.

The benefits of minimising fragmentation and maintaining connectivity include:

- Provision of larger more sustainable sport and recreation areas.
- Physical open space linkages provide opportunities for informal and formal access networks as well as ecological linkages to ensure sustainability of natural vegetation.
- Connecting open space areas to local access networks (such as bikeways) ensures connectivity with residential areas and enhances the diversity and accessibility of recreation options.

Implementation through the planning scheme is mainly done through three broad areas of action:

1. Identifying strategic links and open space network elements in the strategic framework, overlays and other land use planning.
2. Developing scheme provisions that ensure new public recreation areas are of sufficient size and quality and are connected to the open space network and to local access networks.
3. Where possible making sure development does not fragment existing open space and opportunities for building on small fragments or increasing connectivity are encouraged.

Related Principles:

- Sustainability of Recreation
- Regionally Significant Open Space
- Non-Motorised Trail Networks
- Waterways and Riparian Corridors
- Facility Location- Co-Location of Facilities
- Cross Boundary Planning.

Implementation Measures:

1. Ensure the preparation of any bikeways or trails strategy provides linkages between parks and residential nodes.
2. Severed corridors/ linkages can be reclaimed through negotiated easements, replanting vegetation, constructing formal paths.
3. Provide support for public access or natural area recreation corridors through private land by encouraging gazettal of easements that include public access as well as other needs. *Example: negotiate a footpath or bikeway in conjunction with sewerage or water easements.*
4. Where small land parcels are the only park, be realistic in the level of development for the park so that it is not “choked” or use is not too intense for surrounding residents. *Example: it would probably be inappropriate to provide community barbecue facilities in a “pocket handkerchief” park adjacent to residential areas.*
5. In some cases it may be appropriate to “rationalise” the open space estate and dispose of small unusable fragments. Any proceeds generated could be used for acquisition of new sites to improve connectivity.

Case studies and examples relevant to this principle are:

Local Area Open Space Plans

4.13 Cross Boundary Strategic Planning

Coordinated planning across local governments is recommended to ensure:

- continuity of outdoor recreation networks across a region;
- continuity of cyclepaths and other non-motorised trail networks;
- improved user access through compatible policies and practices;
- inappropriate and incompatible land uses in adjoining local government areas are avoided. For example, residential subdivision occurring in one council adjacent to another council’s existing major sports facility, without appropriate buffering; and
- unplanned/unintended duplication of recreation and sport facilities, developments and opportunities are minimised;
- recreation and sport development and management resources are shared;
- unplanned/unintended/destructive competition is avoided;
- maximum possible community benefit and opportunities are produced from the investment in cooperative planning, management and protection of indoor and outdoor recreation settings; and
- recreation management issues which cross local government boundaries and/or affect adjoining local government areas (eg control of off-road vehicles and development of long distance walking trails) are dealt with in a coordinated and complementary way.

Coordinated planning may also promote a cooperative or complementary approach to management of open space.



4.14 Implementing Cross Boundary Strategic Planning

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

Cross Boundary Strategic Planning refers to the physical and organisational boundaries that can constrain effective planning.

This principle encourages councils to think beyond their local government boundaries and for all agencies to think beyond their organisational jurisdictions. There are many advantages:

- Continuity of access to or connection of open space networks across boundaries is maintained or enhanced. *Example: a horse trail across several local government areas.*
- Shared resourcing of regional facilities or difficult to locate activities and minimising of unnecessary duplication. *Examples: a regional perspective is often best in deciding locations for facilities such as rifle ranges and motor sport activities. The cooperation of several councils may be needed for some major sports venues eg. indoor venues, watersport complexes, to be viable.*
- Reduced incidence of incompatible land uses across boundaries.
- Provision of a better diversity of opportunities and settings.
- More rigour when considering the feasibility of commercially sensitive recreation facilities such as pools or indoor sports centres. *Example: realistic feasibility assessment will establish that the catchment for commercially sensitive facilities will often transcend local government boundaries, particularly in regional and rural areas.*
- Sometimes good planning can be stifled by old “parochial” attitudes to boundaries. *Example: “going it alone” often leaves ratepayers a legacy of unviable, inadequate or poorly maintained facilities - facilities closed because of high operational costs relative to use, councils unable to meet replacement cost of equipment, a swimming pool that is too small for future community needs.*
- Working with government agencies and community groups can often lead to creative outcomes that “blur” organisational boundaries and provide real benefits to the community. *Examples: several agencies working together to create a visitor information/community centre where an overlap of compatible uses enhances viability. Councils working in partnership with national park managers to develop and maintain day use/camping areas. Several agencies as co-signatories on grant and capital work funding applications for regional facilities.*

Related Principles:

- Recreation Setting Diversity
- Natural Landscape Features
- Regional Recreation and Sport
- Facility Location/ Co-location of Facilities.

Implementation Measures:

1. Regional inter council forums and planning groups can be established to discuss proposals for new facilities, cross boundary issues and to guide regional level planning. The forum could also be used to develop agreements between councils for shared provision of facilities. This is best achieved at both decision-maker (ie. councillors) and implementation (ie. sport and recreation officers, planners etc) level.
2. Adjoining councils are consulted in the consideration of major sport and recreation development proposals.
3. Preparation of regional strategies for recreation facilities, open space and access networks.
4. Work with the other councils to establish a common system of open space classification, which will assist cross boundary planning.

Case studies and examples relevant to this principle are:

Wet Tropics Walking Track Strategy

4.15 Regionally Significant Open Space

To make wise planning decisions about some areas of open space, the regional context should be considered. A regional context provides a framework in which to identify the significance of local and district open space. Regionally significant open space is land that is regionally significant for any open space function. A regional system is a network of open space lands, which are special in some respect, and separately or collectively, are of regional significance.

Regional open space may serve several functions:

- provide opportunities for outdoor recreation activities;
- provide opportunities for recreation and sport activities;
- shape the form and location of urban development within a regional framework;
- buffer to separate incompatible land uses;
- protect the environment, culture, heritage and natural corridors linking habitats;
- contribute to scenic quality, environmental amenity, livability and cultural enhancement;
- protect productive agricultural and pastoral landscapes/land uses from displacement by urban expansion or industrial development;
- protect and manage the natural systems or processes which maintain both agricultural productivity and biological diversity; and
- preserve land for future recreation and sport demand.

Local and state governments should identify, protect and manage land of strategic importance for regional open space. The identification of such land should be accompanied by a statement of site values and significance to enable decisions to be made regarding the range of compatible land uses and appropriate development (if any) adjacent to or within particular regional open space areas.

For protection, land for a regional open space system should be shown on local government planning scheme maps and supported by strategy statements, objectives and implementation statements. The relationship between local open space and regional open space must also be considered, including the connections between these areas.

The development of a regional open space system also has inherent cross-boundary issues that are dealt with under Cross-Boundary Strategic Planning.

4.16 Implementing Regionally Significant Open Space

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

Regionally Significant Open Space may include river and waterway corridors, mountains and ridges, large natural areas or state managed recreation areas, foreshores, bays, islands and culturally significant sites (eg. historic sites).

It is open space land and water that is important to a defined region in the state (eg. North Western Queensland) or a group of councils. The nature of significance is also such that any area significant at a particular level (eg. state) is also significant at levels below that. In the same way land or water that is nationally or internationally significant is also then regionally significant.

Regional significance of an area is established by the values of the site. In some cases a particular site is significant because it is part of a network or system or is associated with a significant feature.

For example significance can arise from:

- Being significant as a sport or recreation resource to more than one council
- Particular habitat type that is rare locally or regionally (or at greater levels)
- Presence of a site of historic or cultural importance
- Being part of an important regional network such as a water catchment or river system
- A noteworthy geographic feature which has a range of purposes such as recreation, tourism and conservation
- Having particular scenic significance or importance to the regional landscape.

The key issues for recreation and sport provision are:

- Regional level planning and provision for nature based recreation such as State Forest and National Park sites.
- Protection of natural and cultural features of regional significance can contribute to the diversity of settings and recreation opportunities available. However when sites are identified as being of regional significance after they have been historically popular destinations for local residents, tensions can arise when management is required to limit frequency of use or restrict particular activities. This can lead to local communities feeling “disenfranchised” in the cause of some intangible objective. *Example: a National Park is declared on a site traditionally popular with motor bike riders - this activity is then prohibited because it is incompatible with conservation values.*
- Management of regionally significant open space often involves state and national agencies which may, or may not, have a regional presence.
- Local governments may often manage land adjacent to regional open space. Management needs to consider compatibility with the regional site. This may constrain activities, which would otherwise be suitable on the local government land. *Example: old farmland adjacent to a regionally significant National Park would not be suitable for a motor sports facility because the noise impact would be unacceptable, even though the location and land form are suitable.*

Particular reference is made to the publication Regional Landscape Values- Guidelines for their Protection, available from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. The report is discussed in the case studies and examples.

The planning scheme needs to identify regionally significant sites within or adjacent to the scheme area and to apply appropriate measures to protect those significant sites from inappropriate use within or adjacent to the site.

Related Principles:

- Cross Boundary Strategic Planning
- Recreation Setting Diversity
- Regional Recreation and Sport
- Natural Landscape Features.

Other Implementation Measures:

1. For council owned or managed land, management plans can be prepared to protect features or values while managing recreational use.
2. For private land, negotiation with the landowner can be undertaken to develop a co-operative management plan or voluntary agreement that protects the owners’ rights as well as establish a framework for protection of the site.
3. For acquisition of key sites councils could establish an acquisition fund with revenue from a rates based levy, general revenue, trust based contributions etc.

4. Where regionally significant open space is managed by state or national agencies, councils should become involved in their planning processes (and vice versa), and establish effective operational liaison. *Example: a council ensuring local recreation needs are considered in a Management Plan for a State Forest or National Park.*

Case studies and references relevant to this principle are:

Lake Belmore
Regional Landscape Values- Guidelines for their Protection, a Department of Natural Resources report
Wet Tropics Walking Track Strategy
Willowbank Raceway

Figure 4-7 over the page illustrates regionally significant open space in the Far North region.

4.17 Regional Recreation and Sport

The previous section discussed regionally significant open space and its functions. One function is the provision of recreation and sport opportunities at a regional level. The sports industry has a hierarchy of facility standards from local to international. This hierarchy is largely based on a sport's requirements for training or an event at each of these levels.

The location of regional recreation and sport facilities has a significant impact on local government land use planning. These facilities attract users from more than one local government area and require a significant amount of land for the facility itself, as well as car parking, landscaping and any necessary buffering between adjacent land uses. Local governments are partially responsible for providing regional recreation and sport facilities and therefore should allocate sufficient land for these facilities during the town planning process.

Planning the appropriate location of facilities impacts on overall facility development, both within the council where the facility is to be located, and in bordering councils. Planning should include the identification of the hierarchy of facilities and their location within all affected councils.

While regional facilities may be single purpose (eg tennis centre), the agglomeration of different sports facilities in a regional sports park encourages participation across sports and increases the viability of all facilities at the site. For regional sports parks of this nature to be successful, it is necessary to plan for a compatible mix of facilities, and introduce a coordinated management agreement to minimise conflicts that may occur when sharing facilities.

Regional facility planning will help to:

- avoid destructive competition;
- minimise duplication of costly facilities;
- maximise access to the community;
- effectively use resources and facilities; and
- increase the viability of facilities

Figure 4-8 on page 49 shows a regional sport facility.

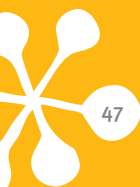
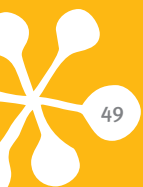


Figure 4-7 Example of regional planning and identification of regionally significant open space



Figure 4-8 Regional sport facility



4.18 Implementing Regional Recreation and Sport

Discussion of Planning and Implementation Issues:

Local governments should consult with state agencies and adjacent local governments to determine the required level of regional recreation and sport provision. In many cases the local government will be partly responsible for supporting the development of regional facilities and opportunities. Regional facilities can include sporting complexes, regional, state or national level competition facilities, larger natural areas managed for conservation, recreation or forestry and sites of particular cultural value.

The key issues for recreation and sport are:

- Locational issues include ease of access from surrounding communities and adjacent local governments.
- Site suitability issues include room for future expansion, the appropriateness of the land for the proposed use, access to public transport, and potential impacts on or from surrounding areas.

Related Principles:

- Regionally Significant Open Space
- Cross Boundary Strategic Planning
- Recreation and Adjacent Land Uses.

Implementation Measures:

1. Work with State Government agencies and adjacent councils to develop a regional facilities plan. A needs study may be undertaken by the local council or local steering group, to identify existing regional recreation and sport facilities and likely future needs. Planning at the regional level can minimise duplication and unnecessary competition between facilities, and facilitate appropriate adjacent land uses.
2. When particular facilities are proposed then a feasibility study should be undertaken to identify the best location, the most sustainable facility mix (ie. what is economically most viable and what meets the anticipated needs of the community most effectively) and the most appropriate management solution for the facility.
3. Planning and feasibility analysis should identify potential commercial and sports organisation partners in the provision of regional facilities. This may be done through establishment of a local/regional forum combining local and state government, community and club organisations and commercial operators.
4. To ensure maximum sustainability of a facility, opportunities for multiple use should be considered in the selection of sites and the planning of the facility.
5. Funding of regional facilities can be difficult to resolve and may involve state, local and other partners in the facility. There are a range of potential capital funding programs.
6. Regional recreation and sport facilities can be enhanced in their viability by co-location with other service and use nodes. This may mean encouraging complementary development through leasing of portions of the regional site or through planning scheme provisions that place land use designations on adjacent lands which encourage appropriate development.

Case studies and references relevant to this principle are:

Willowbank Raceway
Green Island