



PARKS AND LEISURE AUSTRALIA

SUBMISSION TO THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGIES

*Prepared on behalf of PLA WA members engaged in the parks, recreation and
leisure industries*

plawa@parks-leisure.com.au

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PO Box 6178
SWANBOURNE WA 6010

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1. PARKS & LEISURE AUSTRALIA

Parks and Leisure Australia is the key professional association in Australia that provides the Parks and Leisure industry with leadership, advocacy and direction in industry standards, training and professional development opportunities and product innovation.

Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA) promotes cooperation between people and organisations involved in public parks, botanic gardens, open space environments and recreation and leisure facilities and services. It is also an advocate of the Australian parks and leisure profession to all levels of government and business to maintain a high standard and status for professionals in the Australian parks and leisure industry.

Parks and Leisure Australia provides focus, advice and support across a range of disciplines and represents a broad range of professionals nationally with more than 1600 members, and has local, national and international affiliations.

1.1 National Body Aims

The aims of PLA are as follows:-

- To provide a national organisation which promotes co-operation and mutual assistance between persons and organisations associated with public parks, botanic gardens and open space environments; recreation and leisure facilities and services.
- To promote the aesthetic, scientific and social development and study of all matters related to and impacting on, the management and operation of public parks, botanic gardens and open space environments; recreation and leisure facilities and programs.
- To act as an advocate and representative body of the Australian parks and leisure profession to all levels of government and business instrumentalities.
- To promote a conservation ethic within the profession and throughout the parks and leisure industry
- To maintain a high standard and status for the professions within the Australian parks and leisure industry.
- To assist in the development of parks and leisure professionals through the promotion and support for appropriate information, education and training opportunities.
- To arrange meetings and opportunities for member information exchange, through formal and informal forums and conferences, as well as disseminate a range of published material relating to all aspects of parks and leisure services.
- To encourage the application of appropriate resources towards the development and maintenance of parks and leisure services across Australia.
- To stimulate the development of service levels within the industry and the achievement of best practice.

1.2 Western Australian Region

The PLA Western Australian Regional Council (PLAWA) acts both independently and in concert with PLA National Office (NO). At an independent level, PLAWA is responsible for coordinating local events and providing response to local and national issues. From time to time, the region will also take carriage of a national project on behalf of national office. This submission represents the collective views of the PLA WA membership involved in open space planning and provision of services related to open space.

2. CONTEXT OF THIS SUBMISSION

Parks & Leisure Australia (WA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the quality of the planning tools being developed by the WAPC and Department of Planning, to set the framework for the development of the Perth and Peel regions. This submission focuses on issues around the planning for and provision of social infrastructure including both active and passive public open space.

2.1 Public Open Space Position Paper

Parks & Leisure Australia (WA) has been increasingly concerned at the erosion of the quality and availability of public open space (POS) for the Western Australian community. POS within residential developments contributes to a range of community service and environmental functions. Apart from providing spaces for sport and physical activity, children's play and exploration, relaxation and social interaction, POS can enhance the visual amenity of the landscape and assist with urban water management and nature conservation. POS contributes to engendering a sense of place and community connection, influencing feelings of community safety, contributing to economic value of neighbourhoods, providing spaces for community facilities, cultural festivals and events and significantly enhancing residents' quality of life.

Early in 2010, PLA WA released its position paper on the provision of public open space in new residential developments¹. The paper is provided in full as an appendix (Appendix One) to this submission. This paper was developed following a series of intensive workshops with key stakeholders and practitioners throughout the metropolitan and Peel regions, and was preceded by a comprehensive discussion paper which identified the key issues relevant to the industry and the community. The paper identified six key action items. The majority of these are relevant to the two sub-regional strategies under consideration. Of particular relevance here are items 3-6, as reproduced below:-

- Options for proportional allocation (representing up to 10% of subdivisible land) of community, active and environmental open space as suggested in Table 1 must be considered within future development plans. Where allocation may exceed 10% of subdivisible land, proportion of allocation based on purpose (community, active or environmental open space) would be adjusted accordingly.
- Where housing density is increased, particularly using the proposed development frameworks supported by Directions 2031 (the spatial planning framework for Perth and Peel), the proportion of high quality POS ought to exceed the current standard of 10%. It is suggested that POS allocations of up to 50% need to be considered in areas containing high rise (R120 and above) and where regional attractions (such as foreshore or river systems) increase visitation beyond local residents.
- Allocation of land for multi-district reserves needs to be considered as a function of both state and local government. Multi-district reserves may service communities across several local government authorities and provide opportunities for diverse recreational, sporting and nature-based activities. This is in keeping with the findings of the Crawford Report (Item 6.6) that recommends that "preference should be given to infrastructure projects that engage wide sections of the community, such as multi-sport facilities in proximity to other community infrastructure, to help with sustainability and increase social capital"

¹ Carter M et al; Public Open Space Planning in Western Australia: New residential Developments PLA WA 2010

- A mechanism to acquire large tracts of land, outside of the current Metropolitan Region Scheme, that may be suitable for multi-purpose recreational and sporting use is essential. Table 2 outlines how various levels of POS fit within current policy and how multi-district reserves might be incorporated within current public open space hierarchies and new definitions of community, active and environmental open space proposed by PLA WA. (see Appendix One for table)

Our submission to the WAPC builds on these key recommendations.

2.2 Open Space Planners Network

PLA WA operates a number of interest groups within its organisation. A significant group is the Open Space Planners Network (OSPN). This group comprises more than fifty people involved in open space planning from state and local government agencies and the private sector. We share a common interest in ensuring that the provision of public open space achieves the expectations of and provides relevance to the community. The OSPN meets around quarterly and considers issues of concern to the industry as a whole. It shares knowledge and approaches with similar networks elsewhere in Australia, notably the Victorian Open Space Planners Network and a similar group in Queensland.

The group has collaborated with other policy makers such as the *Department of Sport and Recreation* and has provided a consultative mechanism, essential industry feedback and brought real value in the diversity of disciplines PLA's Open Space Planners Network represents to a recent joint project. This has resulted in a classification framework for open space, clarity for terminology, detailed understanding of the level of space needed by communities and the population and distance thresholds for increasing the provision of active open space.

PLA WA has now commenced further work on developing guidelines for the provision of essential social infrastructure in relation to population expansion and thresholds and is developing an association with the Physical Activity Taskforce to build on opportunities for synergy in research and policy development.

3. KEY CONCERNS

3.1 Directions 2031 and beyond

PLA congratulates the *Western Australian Planning Commission* (WAPC) and *Department of Planning* (DoP) for these comprehensive and timely documents and for the opportunity to comment on the content and commitments of the two sub-regional strategies.

Given the draft sub-regional documents reflect principles adopted in the high level spatial framework *Directions 2031 and beyond*, throughout this submission reference is made to the three documents as one. This is also done to consider the detail of the sub-regional documents against the broader commitments made in the adopted principal document.

PLA supports the strategies listed under the Key Themes (page 22 of *Directions 2031 and beyond*) and in particular the broader planning theme number 2: “concern for the protection of green spaces” (page 26).

It is understood that this document is aimed largely at residential development and centres strategies to accommodate population growth. It is acknowledged that much work is yet to be done by a number of agencies to guide implementation of the stated objectives.

PLA WA considers that the document is limited in relation to:

- Unavailability of a completed transport network study to support access and circulation considerations.
- Unavailability of a completed industrial study supporting employment centres and allowing consideration to be given to competing land requirements for district and regional open space.
- Further consideration required for metropolitan attractors to inform detailed sub-regional and local planning.
- The provision of social infrastructure in relation to strategic centres and their roles.
- Urban design solutions for improved roads to accommodate gradual density increases and multiple users, ie. encouraging cycling, walking and urban forestry.
- Differentiating and accommodating POS requirements for urban corridors of higher density from the adjacent lower density areas.
- Direction on resolving conflicting demands for land identified as naturally/culturally significant and that for urban development and in particular for drainage and active open space use.
- Clear acquisition and management responsibilities for regional reserves including river and coastal foreshores, bushland and wetland environments.

- Utilisation of the Metropolitan Regional Improvement Funds for the purpose of purchasing land for regional open space, particularly regional active open space.
- Definitions for local, district and regional infrastructure need to be refined to assist with determining acquisition, capital and management responsibilities.
- An expanded and enhanced open space network that includes adequate active spaces to service the needs of the community. You are referred to the Curtin University *Centre for Sport and Recreation Research* publication: *Emerging Constraints for Public Open Space in Perth Metropolitan Suburbs: Implications of Bush Forever, Water Sensitive Urban Design and Liveable Neighbourhoods for Active Sporting Recreation (October 2010)*. The findings of this report point to current active sports ground supply as being insufficient and constrained by these three operational policies.
- Unavailability of equitable services and infrastructure development programs for new and existing areas, yet to be developed through the WAPC's Urban Development Program.
- Direction on resource allocation and responsibilities for social infrastructure provision.
- Commitment by the WAPC to review POS provision related to urban density and not subdivisible land area.
- Commitment to plan for active and passive POS in conjunction with the *Department for Water*.
- Commitment by the WAPC to seek assistance and funding to address reserves that are constrained by investigations and works for remediation.
- Detailed monitoring, review and reporting commitments.
- Reduction in available active open space in inner urban areas through new and redevelopment of schools (e.g. Swanbourne and Hollywood high schools).
- Insufficient guidance for the provision of public open space, simply reiterating current planning practices rather than considering any alternative approach.

3.2 Provision of Regional Open Space

We note that while the Directions 2031 document refers to the provision of regional open space, it states:

Directions 2031 encourages local government to institute public open space strategies in order to:

- *Strategically guide the development of a system of diverse and well-distributed public open spaces;*
- *Ensure adequate provision of regional and district active recreation sites.*

- *Incorporate protection of the natural environment and water management concepts into the development of public open space; and*
- *encourage walking, cycling and sports as apart of the overall community health picture.*²

Directions 2031 is committed to biodiversity protection and the ongoing implementation of Bush Forever as the overriding principle for acquiring district and regional open space in the document. There are significant competing needs for drainage, active and community open space for the same land. However, the adequate provision of regional open space is also the task of the WAPC. This is for both active open space and community open space. Local Government can assist with local planning strategies to support the provision of regionally significant active sport facilities, social infrastructure, cultural and natural heritage features. It is our view that planning for regional open space needs to be coordinated at regional level by the WAPC, which should be responsible for identifying suitable land and fund acquisition and the development of social infrastructure. Other agencies, such as the *Department of Water and the Department of Environment and Conservation* would be more suitable for the acquisition and management of regional green reserves.

3.3 Provision of District Open Space

The quality and quantity of district open space provided in the previous ten or so years does not meet current community need and is likely to be over utilised if the level of anticipated urban growth is reached over the next twenty years. Given the limited resources of local governments, land for district open space should be secured as a matter of urgency by the WAPC utilising Metropolitan Regional Improvement Funds.

3.4 Provision of Local Open Space

The WAPC Liveable Neighbourhoods operational guidelines has delivered poor active open space and passive open space outcomes and a plethora of small pocket parks of limited use beyond a location for a small children's playground. A variety of forms and functions in local POS is supported, particularly in higher density locations, but often very small areas of POS lead to conflicts of use, higher maintenance costs for local government and limited recreation destinations for communities.

3.5 Planning for and Provision of Infrastructure

3.5.1 Social Infrastructure

In the outer urban area and Peel, the Directions 2031 document does not address social infrastructure for green field developments outside of Liveable Neighbourhoods. Increased housing densities and lot yields will reduce the private space available for social connection, including family gatherings and celebrations and ultimately impact on the public realm for these activities.

² Directions 2031 and Beyond Dept of Planning & WAPC; August 2010 p 45

In the central area, renewal of transit oriented urban areas requires the inclusion of all levels of public security, health and social support. Unsociable behaviour and homelessness is increasingly problematic in public spaces of centres along train and major bus routes. Serious consideration needs to be given to effect community support programs implemented in conjunction with crime prevention design and urban renewal.

Additional emphasis should be placed on specific cultural community support and development at the same centres. Often the transit oriented settlement increases are by those establishing unique cultural identity. Land use planning cannot be effective without recognising community character and need and by engaging with other services agencies.

3.5.2 Better Urban Water Management

Caution is required when applying water sensitive urban design principles. The misuse of these principles in urban infrastructure design can be short sighted and counter productive. As with all design philosophies, they should be used as principles only with solutions designed and implemented specific to each situation. Directions 2031 should include a statement to encourage and facilitate further learning for those responsible for requiring, approving, designing and managing stormwater in an urban catchment.

3.5.3 Urban design solutions for roads

For urban redevelopment, careful consideration should be given to the effective planning and funding for street improvement, to include the accommodation of street trees, pathways, cycle ways, parking contributions, refuse collection, improved streetscape amenity and varied use, etc. Work undertaken by Dr Greg Moore³ has identified the contribution trees make to the preservation of road and footpath pavement through their cooling effects as well as the added value and contribution to social capital that street trees may make to an urban environment. Significantly enhanced street tree and parkland environment could effectively be incorporated in this document.

Responsibility for the provision of recreational and local path systems is with LGAs, not the Perth Bicycle Network. Local Governments should be included in the planning of all bicycle and walking routes.

3.5.4 State Policy

There is a lack of cohesion between the Directions 2031 documents and the policy framework which should inform and drive many of the innovations. This disconnect will limit the effectiveness of the strategies and as a consequence, most of the impact of these strategies will fall to the responsibility of local government through lower level planning documents such as structure plans and subdivision

³ <http://www.landfood.unimelb.edu.au/resman/staff/cv/Moore.htm>

applications. There needs to be a greater commitment and leadership to delivering the infrastructure required for the anticipated growth in population. Policies such as Development Contribution Policy SDP 3.6 may assist with providing guidance for acquiring land and infrastructure for public open space and social infrastructure and should be referred to in the Direction 2031 documentation. This needs to be addressed in the two draft sub-strategies.

The associated planning to facilitate a prioritised program of land acquisition and infrastructure development is a matter of urgency ahead of subdivision planning.

3.5.5 Shared Facilities with Schools

We caution against the inclusion of school facilities as shared use public open space. There is an increasing reliance on calculations for public open space to include school grounds. In the inner urban areas this has become a somewhat fraught problem with the redevelopment of schools as residential land and the subsequent removal of that open space. In our view, shared space arrangements with schools should be specifically excluded from any calculations of the availability of public open space. Shared cost grounds development and maintenance vary between projects and the *Department of Education and Training* has not always met its agreement obligations. There have been some instances where schools have subsequently excluded public access by installing security fencing, or withdrawn from agreements with LGAs.

3.6 **Public Open Space Strategies**

While it is ideal for Local Governments to consider and plan for the quantity and quality of POS in each Municipality through its local planning strategies, it can be onerous for many urban local governments to provide adequate resources and to address competing priorities to deliver a range of strategies. Given the need to address district and regional open spaces as a priority, it would be reasonable for the WAPC to broker sub-regional planning and resourcing to assist with delivering quality outcomes in this regard.

There is also a role to play for the state government through the *Department for Sport and Recreation* or other agencies, to assist with a prioritised program of development and funding for the construction of sportsgrounds and related facilities, and in particular criteria for active open space acquisition and development through the Metropolitan Regional Improvement Fund.

In this, PLA is in a position to provide significant high-level advice on location, design and variety of POS provision.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Land Acquisition Program

Directions 2031 and its sub-regional strategies support the WAPC's ongoing acquisition of land for the green network, possibly as part of Metropolitan Attractors and possibly through direct purchase. It is clear that future reservations under the MRS would be for natural areas dedicated to preserving the amenity and access to foreshores and existing reserves in the central region and for reservation of Bush Forever in the outer region. However, this does not address 'fit for purpose' land acquisition for other public purposes, particularly active regional open space.

It is recommended that:

- 1) The WAPC acquire suitable land for active regional and district open space.***
- 2) The WAPC acquire suitable land for district and regional level social infrastructure, as well as additions to the green network.***

4.2 Development and adoption of guidelines for active open space provision

Active open space development may be constrained by:

- Conflicts between multiple uses of POS land and utilities: power, sewer systems, drainage, power and gas services.
- Water sources allocated on a 'first come/first served basis', when a more equitable 'highest and best use' will assist with proper allocation and use for all services including for sports surface and recreational area irrigation.
- Competing and increased costs for infrastructure construction and operation, eg. power to buildings, recreational facilities and pumps. This raises issues for local governments with regard to user pay facilities in addition to rates paid.
- Past uses or nearby activities that limit the land's potential and maximise costs for remediation and/or development for recreational purposes.
- Limited long term planning for current and future community needs.

It is recommended that:

- 3) The Liveable Neighbourhoods review currently underway address public open space provision in the land development process and incorporate recent research conducted by the Centre for Sport and Recreation Research (October 2010) in the literature review stage.***
- 4) The Department for Sport and Recreation assist the WAPC to prepare a plan for district and regional active open space for the Perth and Peel Regions.***

- 5) *The Department for Water assist the WAPC with planning for water sources for irrigation of POS and the development of a model for equitable allocation of water licenses.*
- 6) *The WAPC review POS provision to correlate with housing densities.*
- 7) *The WAPC assist with funding the investigation and remediation of lands identified for recreational purposes.*
- 8) *Open Space associated with schools is excluded from calculations relating to available public open space.*

4.3 Provision of infrastructure – Outer sub region

The immediate concerns for the outer sub regions are:

- Inadequate provision of community and active open space to meet the current needs of the community.
- The inaccuracy of population forecasts for growth in outer metropolitan areas which means that demand for facilities is significantly ahead of provision.
- The provision of active open space competing with regionally significant biodiversity protection.
- Competition for land for recreational and social infrastructure that could also be developed for industrial or commercial centres to increase localised employment.
- Limited available ground water supplies for the development of active and recreational spaces.
- Limited planning for rationalising the provision of social infrastructure relative to centres.

It is recommended that:

- 9) *The WAPC funds a strategy for the adequate provision of POS and associated social infrastructure at a regional and district level in the outer metropolitan sub region.*

4.4 Review of infrastructure – Central metropolitan sub-region

The immediate concerns for the central metropolitan sub-regions are:

- Land and social infrastructure and services to support changing communities and their needs.
- Resourcing for retrofitting infrastructure to meet the needs of renewed communities.
- No additional POS or regional reserve locations are identified, despite the stated commitments.
- The Stirling Highway development relies on commuting employment and no additional accessible POS, social services or facilities are identified to support the proposed population increase.

- The smaller household trend requires new approaches to define social infrastructure required and POS relative to housing densities.

It is recommended that:

- 10) The WAPC liaise with LGAs in the Central sub region to ensure adequate provision of open space and social infrastructure.*

5. CONCLUSION

Parks and Leisure Australia (WA Division) thanks the WAPC and *Department of Planning* for the opportunity to comment on the draft sub-strategies for this important planning tool. In our view, significant issues remain around the development of and access to regional and district open space and the effectiveness of *Liveable Neighbourhoods* to provide adequately for the provision of active open space.

While Directions 2031 is a land use planning tool which establishes the framework for community planning, without taking community and social issues into consideration the work will not deliver the expected outcomes. It is the view of PLA WA that there is a need for on-going discussion and consultation surrounding this important community issue. PLA WA is keen to offer assistance in this regard. In this, PLA is in a position to provide significant high level advice in the development of an integrated regional and district open space plan for the Perth and Peel regions.

6. APPENDIX ONE

Public Open Space Position Paper



Public open space planning in Western Australia: New residential developments

**Position Paper
March 2010**

**Parks and Leisure Australia
(WA Region)**

Prepared on behalf of PLA WA by May Carter PhD

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Photo: M. Carter, 2007

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to identify key issues associated with the planning and management of public open space within new residential developments in Western Australia. While many of the issues raised within this paper may also apply to planning and management of public open space within established residential areas, it is recognised that provision of public open space within new developments presents immediate and more pressing concerns.

Public Open Space (POS) refers to publicly accessible land set aside for sport, recreation and community purposes and may include parklands, sporting fields, playgrounds, bushland and built areas such as civic squares, plazas or skate parks. POS within residential developments contributes to a range of community service and environmental functions. Apart from providing spaces for sport and physical activity, children's play and exploration, relaxation and social interaction, POS can enhance the visual amenity of the landscape and assist with urban water management and nature conservation. Use of POS plays a role in engendering a sense of place and community connection, influencing feelings of community safety, contributing to economic value of neighbourhoods, providing spaces for community facilities, cultural festivals and events and significantly enhancing residents' quality of life.

This position paper was developed for Parks and Leisure Australia, WA Region (PLA WA). In general, PLA WA membership consists of individuals and organisations involved in sport and recreation facility planning, community development and parks design, management and maintenance. Local government officers who perform these roles are well-represented within the membership, as are independent consultants providing facility planning and management, community development and landscape services.

Information was gathered through a series of interviews conducted with PLA WA members from July to September, a discussion workshop held in early September 2009, email correspondence from individual members, and a presentation to members in late October 2009. While there is some documented evidence to support many of the comments, most are based on individual observations and anecdotal evidence only. There were various points of views expressed by contributors and this paper represents the overall position adopted by PLA WA.

Overview of key issues

Many decisions relating to POS planning within residential developments in Western Australia are based on an historical allocation of 10% of subdivisible land for public use. In 1955, the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan for metropolitan Perth proposed that a minimum of 10% of subdivisible land be allocated to POS for recreational purposes such as children's play areas and sports fields. This initial allocation was based on an English local authority model that recommended one hectare of POS per 1000 habitable rooms. In translating this allocation to Western Australia, Stephenson recommended allocation be set at one hectare per 1000 persons, not per habitable rooms as recommended in the English model^[1].

Most international standards of allocation of public open space are associated with population density and calculated per 1000 population ^[2]. However, the level of allocation varies across nations. In the United Kingdom, a standard of 6 acres (2.43 hectares) per 1000 population is now promoted. Within the United States, POS allocations in new developments vary across the country and calculation of required POS may vary from 2.5 to 4.25 hectares per 1000 population. In some US states, POS allocation is not governed by statutory requirements and may be determined by perceived resident demand and accepted

(profitable) models of residential development^[3]. In many ways Western Australia has been fortunate to have a recognised standard of provision, and now is an opportune time to question the quantum and nature of that standard.

Through reference to the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan and the Metropolitan Region Scheme adopted in 1963, POS allocations in Western Australia have remained relatively constant over the past five decades with little acknowledgement of changing social and environmental conditions^[1, 4, 5]. It is likely that allocations of useable POS have decreased, as under Western Australian Liveable Neighbourhoods guidelines adopted over the past decade, allocation can be reduced to 8% of subdivisible land when natural areas, cultural features or urban water management facilities (open water bodies or drainage swales) are included as part of public open space^[6].

Unlike required assessments associated with environmental impact or urban water management, there is currently no explicit requirement under statutory planning frameworks to assess public open space function, design or long-term management as part of new residential development proposals. In practice, many new residential estates contain numerous small pocket parks distributed throughout each neighbourhood. While many of these parks are highly valued by residents, current emphasis on inclusion of neighbourhood spaces leaves little opportunity to develop larger multi-purpose areas suitable for sport, active recreation, relaxation and social interaction. The fragmented nature and the lack of connectivity between areas of public open space, and a corresponding lack of large areas of well-designed, multi-functional POS are emerging as major concerns for local communities. Apart from community concerns regarding limited functionality, having to distribute management and maintenance resources over a greater number of smaller parks is becoming increasingly problematic for some local governments.

General issues identified by PLA WA members relate to:

- enhancing functionality, useability and diversity of POS design;
- improving clarity of interpretation and implementation of current planning policy; and
- effective management and maintenance of public open spaces.

Further to these, more specific concerns included:

- lack of deliberative POS policy in some local government authorities and inconsistent use of terminology within existing state and local government policy documents;
- lack of involvement in planning processes by most local government leisure, recreation and park management officers; and
- associated lack of opportunity to ensure flexible, creative, adaptive, ecologically sustainable public open spaces meet current and future community needs.

As quantity of public open space provided within new areas of residential developments remains the primary focus of POS planning, issues relating to quality, useability and functionality of public open space do not receive sufficient attention. Opportunities for innovation, creativity and sustainability of urban design are being lost.

PLA WA policy positions

In response to these concerns, PLA WA puts forward the following policy positions:

1. To ensure provision of good quality public open space, POS purpose and function, design and location, management and maintenance must be considered and assessed in the early stages of local area planning. Without agreement by all stakeholders to this level of forward planning, it is likely that gaps will continue to exist between the good intentions of planners and developers in allocating and designing POS, the functional outcomes required by those responsible for POS management and maintenance, and the standard of POS expected by local communities.
2. Developing terminology definitions and allocation standards that are accepted and understood across different disciplines is critical to reducing confusion between planners, designers, facility managers and end-users. At present, public open space is most often defined in relation to hierarchical systems based on size, not function. Current definitions include local, neighbourhood district or regional open space and if considered, function is described as active or passive only (see background paper for more information ^[7]). PLA WA proposes that the definitions presented in Table 1 be considered. Within these definitions, POS is defined by function and includes community (COS), active (AOS) and environment (EOS) open space. (It is recognised that at the time of writing, a Department of Sport and Recreation sponsored project to develop industry accepted terminology is underway.)
3. Options for proportional allocation (representing up to 10% of subdivisible land) of community, active and environmental open space as suggested in Table 1 must be considered within future development plans. Where allocation may exceed 10% of subdivisible land, proportion of allocation based on purpose (community, active or environmental open space) would be adjusted accordingly.
4. Where housing density is increased, particularly using the proposed development frameworks supported by Directions 2031 (the spatial planning framework for Perth and Peel), the proportion of high quality POS ought to exceed the current standard of 10%. It is suggested that POS allocations of up to 50% need to be considered in areas containing high rise (R120 and above) and where regional attractions (such as foreshore or river systems) increase visitation beyond local residents.
5. Allocation of land for multi-district reserves needs to be considered as a function of both state and local government. Multi-district reserves may service communities across several local government authorities and provide opportunities for diverse recreational, sporting and nature-based activities. This is in keeping with the findings of the Crawford Report (Item 6.6) that recommends that "preference should be given to infrastructure projects that engage wide sections of the community, such as multi-sport facilities in proximity to other community infrastructure, to help with sustainability and increase social capital"^[8].
6. A mechanism to acquire large tracts of land, outside of the current Metropolitan Region Scheme, that may be suitable of multi-propose recreational and sporting use is essential. Table 2 outlines how various levels of POS fit within current

policy and how multi-district reserves might be incorporated within current public open space hierarchies and new definitions of community, active and environmental open space proposed by PLA WA.

Table 1: Descriptions of public open space (community and active open space) and environmental open space; and options for standard allocation of POS as 8 or 10% of subdivisible land within new residential developments

Description	Options for standard allocation of POS		Function and purpose
Public Open Space (POS)	8%^a	10%^b	Publicly accessible land set aside for sport, recreation and community purposes. May include parklands, sporting fields, playgrounds, bushland/wetland and built areas such as civic squares, plazas or skate parks.
Community Open Space (COS)	4%	4%	Parkland with infrastructure such as playgrounds and open play spaces, skate parks, BBQ and picnic areas, walk paths and cycle ways, and community centres. Various levels (currently defined by size) can provide functional diversity. May adjoin active or environmental open space.
Active Open Space (AOS)	4%	6%	<p>Parkland with community infrastructure and capacity to accommodate competitive sports fields with sufficient flexibility to meet seasonal demand. Optimal location is adjacent to community or environmental open space as part of multi-purpose area with facilities for recreation and sport. Various levels defined by size:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood AOS: junior sport only District AOS: at least two (≥2) adult playing fields Multi-district AOS: three or more (3+) adult playing fields suitable for state sporting fixtures <p>Areas allocated to district and multi-district AOS have the capacity to accommodate required field dimensions for junior and adult fixtures, field orientation with run-off and buffer zones, plus change rooms and player amenities as required.</p>
Environmental Open Space (EOS)	2%	Not included as POS	Designated as bushland and wetland reserve, drainage swale or water catchment, road buffers, greenways and streetscapes. May be part of current Bush Forever or other reserve system and if included as part of POS, areas must be managed to enable use for public recreational purposes.
<p>^a Based on Liveable Neighbourhoods model of POS allocation</p> <p>^b Based on Stephenson-Hepburn model of POS allocation</p>			

Table 2: Description of various categories of public open space, primary responsibility for provision and management, current planning policy relating to community, active and environmental open space

Active and Environmental Open Space						
Description and primary responsibility		Area	Proximity	Public Open Space (POS)		Environmental (EOS)
				Community (COS)	Active (AOS)	
1	Local Park	≤3000m ²	150-300m	Parklands, playgrounds and other recreation-focused community facilities. Varying levels of POS provision (based on size and proximity) outlined in operational guidelines.	Standard of provision not well defined in current operational policy. Junior-size oval/s often co-located within school facilities (joint LGA & DET responsibility).	Current operational policy includes Bush Forever, drainage swales, water catchment, green corridors, streetscapes and other incidental green spaces within POS allocation. Management plan for EOS and recreational use not required.
	Neighbourhood Park	3000-5000m ²	400-600m			
	District Open Space	2.5-7ha	600m-1km			
2	Multi-district Reserve	No specific allocation, specific definition or stated mechanism for acquisition within current planning policy		Multi-purpose areas of POS, with capacity for varied recreational (COS) and sporting (AOS) functions. Allocation of AOS able to accommodate diversity of good-quality facilities suitable for junior and adult sporting fixtures.		May include or be adjacent to bushland or wetland reserves. Well suited to adopt best practice water management and sustainable design principles
	Regional Open Space	Defined and mapped within Metropolitan Region Scheme (MRS) as adopted in 1963 with various amendments since		Reserved for conservation and recreation purposes	No specific allocation for AOS within MRS	Significant contribution to urban nature conservation
	Foreshore reserves Wetlands and buffers	Appropriate community access and use defined within State Planning Policy.		Relevant state planning policies Include: SPP2 Environment and Natural Resources SPP2.2 Gngara Groundwater Protection SPP2.6 State Coastal Planning SSP2.8 Bushland Policy for the Perth Metropolitan Region (Draft) SPP2.10 Swan-Canning River System		
1. Included for approval in structure plan. Local government responsibility post development 2. Not included in structure plan unless through voluntary negotiation. Ongoing state and local government responsibility						

Strategic actions

To achieve proposed changes to the current system of public open space planning, management and maintenance, PLA WA proposes the following actions.

1. Increase understanding of public open space planning processes

To ensure personnel involved in public open space allocation, community facility management and open space maintenance understand the complexity of planning and engineering processes involved in public open space provision, it is proposed that PLA WA work with the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) and the Department of Planning (DoP) to co-host a series of workshops and discussion forums. These workshops and forums will be designed to:

- generate greater understanding of the perspectives and expectations of various stakeholder groups involved in all stages of POS planning, design and management;
- develop understanding of the economic implications of POS provision for all stakeholders;
- demonstrate inadequacies in current practice through case study examples;
- develop inter- and cross-sectoral dialogue and ongoing relationships; and
- enhance the capacity of local government operational staff to participate effectively in public open space planning processes.

Attendees may include:

- local government officers involved in POS planning, design and management;
- members of the Local Government Planners Association (LGPA);
- representatives from Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA);
- urban designers, planners and consultants involved in residential development projects;
- officers from state planning authorities such as the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and Department of Planning (DoP);
- private developers and members of the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA);
- members of urban design organisations such as Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) and Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA); and
- associated government organisations such as the departments of Education and Training (DET), Environment and Conservation (DEC), and Health (DoH).

2. Encourage inter-sectoral POS planning and policy development

To enhance effectiveness and consistency of POS planning between state and local government authorities, it is PLA WA's position that incentives and support to develop public open space policies and planning frameworks be provided to local government. Incentives may include financial assistance or in-kind contributions such as guided policy development through access to skilled, experienced personnel. Development of local POS policy must involve needs assessment and alignment of Town Planning Schemes, biodiversity strategies, community and cultural facility planning and other relevant documents.

In addition, local government authorities must assume responsibility for inter-sectoral planning and assessment of structure plans within their own organisations. Several issues raised by PLA WA members are associated with limited understanding of planning and engineering processes (combined with a lack of involvement) by personnel responsible for community facility management and maintenance of public spaces.

Proposed development of POS would be assessed to ensure purpose, design and location meet expected functional and connectivity thresholds, as ascribed within agreed distribution plans. With attention paid to distribution of a diverse range of public open spaces across one or multiple districts, it is more likely that patterns of allocation will meet the broad needs of community members, and less likely that duplication or lack of access to particular types of POS will occur within local areas.

3. Develop effective local planning frameworks

To assist the forward planning process, it is recommended that local government authorities develop district and regional open space distribution plans that map purpose, function and design of existing public and other open spaces. Figure 1 outlines a series of questions that might be included in a potential model of planning, design and management for public open space.

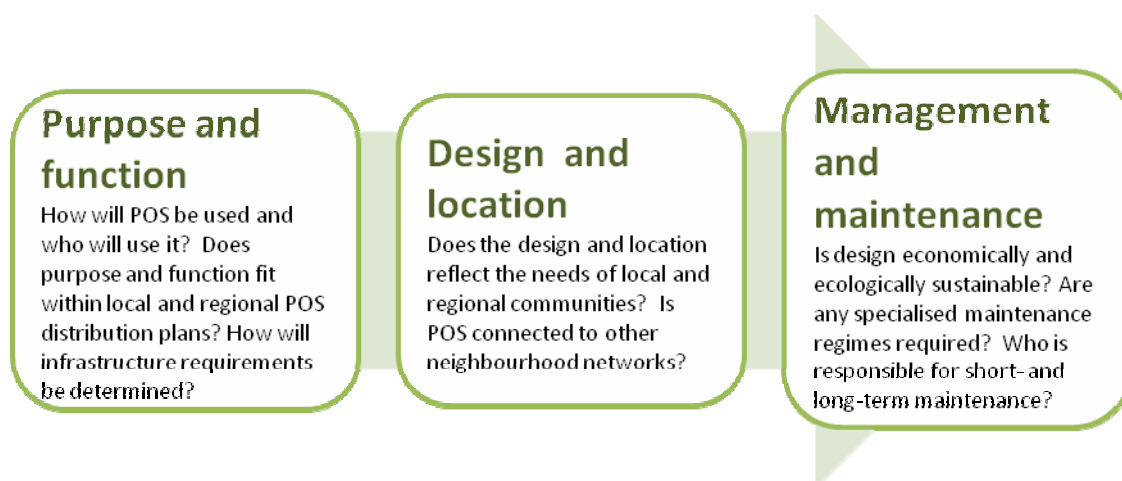


Figure 1: PDM (purpose, design and management) Model for POS
(adapted from POS planning model developed by Syrinx Environmental PL)

4. Support further research

Apart from the project currently underway to develop industry accepted terminology, DSR is working to develop a research agenda that will investigate issues relating to POS provision. The Centre for Sport and Recreation Research at Curtin University of Technology is reviewing the impact of Bush Forever and water sensitive urban design on POS allocation and provision. It is expected that PLA WA members will provide significant input to both of these projects.

It is strongly recommended that all future research projects examine the costs incurred by local government authorities, developers and residents in new communities as part of public open space provision and maintenance.

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