

THE 5 KEY SUCCESS AREAS

Spaces & Places

Key Objective: To ensure that the built and social environments support physical activity through provision of open spaces, leisure areas, sporting facilities, housing and transport facilities and services.

The creation and maintenance of a built environment that supports physical activity is the most challenging part of the Active City Program.

For political decision-makers, an environment that increases citizens' physical activity is of major significance. An attractive, active, accessible, safe and healthy environment makes a city or a municipality a welcoming place. It invites people to walk and cycle, to stop and talk, watch and learn. Cities and municipalities are alive when they can offer flexible traffic management, easily accessible and safe public spaces as well as areas that facilitate various encounters.

The construction and maintenance of a sufficient network of sports facilities is not an impossible challenge for sports organizations, municipalities and the private sector. The challenge rather is to integrate these infrastructures in the daily lives of the communities operating in the municipality.

Factors enabling a physically active lifestyle in an urban infrastructure include:

- traffic management;
- bicycle ways networks;
- pedestrian ways;
- access to parks, green areas, playgrounds;
- access to workplaces, shops, etc.;
- easily accessible seaside and lakeside areas, rivers and forests;
- land use planning processes;
- environmental solutions encouraging physical activity;
- solutions that encourage use of stairs;
- structural solutions for physical activity and sports;
- roadmaps for physical activity in parks and on pedestrian and bicycle ways;
- etc.

This also involves the question of whether sports arenas are insular areas dedicated to sports or common areas integrated in the community environment. If the latter is true, sports facilities provide opportunities for everyone and serve as a local, regional and even national living space. These venues can offer various possibilities for anything from daily activities to special occasions. In general terms, sports structures in an Active City are venues for sports and the citizens' physical activity, in other words, for an active community.

Opportunities to perform physical activity have to be integrated in community and environmental planning. An operative process that includes traditions and cultural backgrounds, legislation, politicians and various policies, urban & environmental processes and the requirements of the voluntary, private and public sectors is needed.

