

**COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH SPORTS:
EXAMINING HOW SPORTING FACILITIES CAN BECOME MORE THAN A VENUE**

© Connor Pope, 2022

Master of Science
in
Urban & Regional Planning
University of Alberta

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are a myriad of choices and problems to consider when formulating policy that is the groundwork for the face of a city. Recreation spaces, sport fields, and similar infrastructure for sport or exercise purposes do not have a small footprint in terms of lands, or infrastructure needed. Compounding the task slightly, are the various professional sporting leagues. The teams that play within these leagues have game day venues that seat numerous fans as well as vast facilities for training. This is an area where urban planning and sports overlap: the designing and planning of appropriate facilities for these types of sports. Being host to a professional sports team, or having a collegiate level team that carries history, can provide opportunities, and can act as an amenity for a city.

The success of these stadia projects with their integration into the urban landscape is determined by a multitude of factors. Consumerism will always be tied to sporting events, but the notion does not have to extend into the entire district. However, careful consideration of the location, integration, surrounding amenities, expanding the potential user base, and ensuring proper transportation within the district are some of the planning considerations that may have been overlooked in past sport projects. Placemaking principles are a useful tool while integrating stadia into urban landscapes.

Community building is not solely about creating spaces for people to gather but also about providing common ground and being an active member of the community. Sports provide a channel for members of the community to come together and have shared experiences. Strong relationships are at the heart

of enhancing community capacity and community building initiatives help support sport stadia projects. Having community amenities where the facilities are open to all members of the community is essential. The community should always be a major part of the planning of these projects. Without the community members, the Stadia will sit empty. It is time to reach out and avoid stadia designed for corporate use surrounded by consumption districts.

Key words: sports; community building; stadia development; placemaking; urban redevelopment.