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“The world is your playground – be it a forest, a beach, a local park - there’s always an opportunity to play, but the key is to facilitate that need through urban planning.”

As the focus of sport shifts more towards an idea of wellness rather than general competition from a political view, this session provides some insight into how urban planning, particularly in Europe, is taking this shift in mindset and applying it to its infrastructure to promote health and wellness while also serving general purpose.

Key points from the session:

- In the Netherlands, the population is growing, however club memberships are on a downward trend. Governments are still investing in sport, but public spaces and general health areas for fitness are now taking over more of the funding than traditional sport.
- The way sport is currently structured in culture about competition, and not about having fun. A key to making sports fun again is emphasising the fun element to replace the need for winning, and providing that through urban planning that makes sport more of an experience than a simple win or loss scenario.

- “Don’t see mobile technology as a trend – see it as an opportunity.”
Mobile technology can be essential in encouraging those that aren’t usually very active to explore and improve their fitness. Technology is not always a gateway to laziness and can often create the opposite.
- There are two different directions to approaching urban sports planning; Combining Functions & Cross Sectional.
- A “sports hall of the future” should be an open space with a roof, but no walls blocking entry, making it easy to get involved and use. Ideally it can serve multiple functions and is designed to do more than just serve sports (i.e. concerts, events) to become the true epicenter of a neighborhood.
- Rather than always building things on level ground, bigger opportunities often lie in going below ground level, creating multi-purpose venues that serve multiple sports, as well as general recreational activities. For example, a skate park that mirrors as a river embankment during the wetter months/a level of sand around a swimming pool to encourage beach volleyball/football to be played around the pool, as well as in those countries where possible a skating rink for winter sports.
- Project Paradox: People often have to make decisions without enough knowledge, leading to less thought out infrastructure. The ideal method is actually to postpone decisions as long as you can, and gain knowledge that will make decisions much easier and lead to well thought-out urban planning.