



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HIGHWAYS
PHILIPPINE COMMISSION ON WOMEN
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

AUG 14 2023

JOINT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 2023- 0001

SUBJECT: Guidelines on the Creation, Use, and Management of Parks and Public Open Spaces for the Promotion of Physical and Mental Health and Social Well-being

I. BACKGROUND

Literature has long established the link between health and the benefits in investing in safe and sustainable green developments to heighten health promotion in cities and communities. A 2013 World Health Organization report on urban planning, environment, and health stated that green spaces can positively affect physical activity, social and psychological well-being, facilitate social cohesion, improve air quality, reduce exposure to noise pollution, and potentially reduce public health inequalities. Green spaces also serve as buffers which help absorb the effects of climate change such as flooding and forecasted increase in temperature and can also serve as a ready venue for evacuation in case of natural or man-made emergencies.

In view of the foregoing, it is the role of the national and local governing bodies to enable the promotion of physical wellness and the protection of mental health and well-being by ensuring the availability and accessibility of healthy and safe public open spaces. These guidelines for public green, blue, and open spaces were developed to assist relevant stakeholders and administrators in the promotion, use, and management of public outdoor venues and facilities.

These guidelines likewise provide the minimum standards for constituting healthy and safe parks and public open spaces to guide administrators and developers in maximizing its physical, social, psychological, cultural, and environmental benefits. In line with the settings-based approach of the Health Promotion Framework Strategy 2030, the creation of such healthy and safe public open spaces also strengthen social cohesion in local communities and help transform neighborhoods into environments that are healthy to live, work, play, and age in. This policy, together with other intersectoral initiatives with health partners, will provide communities with health-supportive conditions that support better health outcomes for all Filipinos.

II. OBJECTIVE

This Order aims to provide guidance and standards for the creation, promotion, use, and management of public open spaces to support the physical and mental health and well-being of Filipinos.

III. SCOPE AND COVERAGE

This Order shall cover all users, national and local government administrators, and other relevant stakeholders involved in the development, administration, and use of parks and public open spaces.

IV. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Public open spaces - is an umbrella term which shall refer to land spaces provided by the national or local government units, designated as parks and intended for physical activity, leisure, and recreational use by the public. Public open spaces may also include privately-owned land spaces that are made publicly accessible. These include the following:

1. *Blue, green, and urban spaces as public spaces characterized by surface or setting:*
 - a. **Blue spaces** – shall refer to public open spaces with water elements ranging from natural and man-made ponds, aquariums, to coastal and riparian zones and public beaches.
 - b. **Green spaces** – shall refer to public open spaces with natural surfaces or natural settings; green open spaces include, but are not limited to, trails, forest parks, natural wildlife areas, community gardens, nature parks and reserves, zoos, aquariums and botanical gardens.
 - c. **Urban spaces** – shall refer to open-space areas reserved for parks and other open spaces, including plant life, water features, and other kinds of natural and man-made environments generally considered open to the public, including streets or roads, public plazas, theme parks, water parks, and other amusement parks, historic open spaces such as colonial plazas or freedom parks, education campuses, neighborhood community parks and gardens, and institutional or corporate grounds.
2. *Active and passive spaces as public open spaces characterized by activity:*
 - a. **Active open spaces** – shall refer to public open spaces intended primarily for formal outdoor sports or organized physical activities; active open spaces include sports complexes, basketball courts, tennis courts, playgrounds, etc.
 - b. **Passive open spaces** – shall refer to public open space used primarily for leisure, unstructured physical activities, passive recreation or informal play; passive open spaces include neighborhood parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation areas or heritage sites, nature reserves, and the like.
3. *People's streets as public open spaces* – shall refer to streets, roads, parking lots, or bridges within the community that are prioritized for use by pedestrians, bicycles, and light mobility devices, closed for motor vehicle through-traffic, and are

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designated only for physical activity, leisure, and recreational use by community members exclusively or on a specified schedule.

V. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The adoption and implementation of the provisions of this Order shall be guided by the following principles:

- A. **Equity and Inclusivity.** Public open spaces shall be designed and developed with cognizance to the needs of all individuals, especially vulnerable population groups within the community. Developers, administrators, and enforcers shall make use of participatory/intersectoral approaches, gender mainstreaming strategies, and universal design practices, among others to make public open spaces accessible to all individuals regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and/or socio-economic status.
- B. **Whole-of-society and Whole-of-government.** Partnerships shall be fostered between relevant National Government Agencies (NGAs), Local Government Units (LGU), civil society or non-government organizations, people's organizations, professional groups of urban planners, landscape architects, etc., academic institutions, and private sector for a collaborative and inter- sectoral approach in the creation, promotion, use, and management of public parks and open spaces. Consultations with community members shall be a critical component in the determination and development of the public space, such that no public space shall be made without the consent of the local community.
- C. **Co-responsibility.** Public space developers, administrators, and enforcers shall lead the proper creation, management, and maintenance of public open spaces; All users, visitors, and community members shall likewise have the responsibility to abide by the relevant public open space policies and rules to ensure sustainability and guarantee a healthy, safe, and enjoyable experience for all.

VI. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Public open spaces shall ensure equitable access of all people, regardless of age, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, political affiliation or belief, ethnicity, disability, and/or socio-economic status.
- B. In order to maximize the physical, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental benefits of public open spaces, development of relevant spaces and infrastructure shall be guided by the minimum standards set out in Section VII-A of this Order. Notwithstanding the development of relevant spaces and infrastructure shall also be in compliance with existing prescribed plans and designs set by relevant laws and department orders of the administrative agencies concerned.
- C. All public open spaces that are required to attain development or building permits shall undergo the DOH Health Impact Assessment Review Process pursuant to DOH-DILG Joint Administrative Order No. 2021-0001, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources's Environmental Impact Statement System pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 1586.

VII. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

A. Minimum standards for the creation, promotion, operation, and use of healthy public open spaces

1. *Open and accessible*

- a. Recognizing that public open spaces are essential to the core functioning of a community, all such spaces shall be designed and developed cohesively within the network of other essential destinations and establishments.
- b. All public open spaces shall be easily accessible by foot, wheelchair, bicycle and other forms of active or light modes of mobility, and public transit. Such accessibility includes multiple entry and exit points, safely designed walking paths and pedestrian crosswalks, and clear wayfinding to connect to public transport stations. Running routes, bicycle lanes, and active transport parking facilities shall also be incorporated into the design and development of public open spaces, as applicable. These shall be in accordance with the National Building Code of the Philippines (NBCP), DPWH Department Order No. 263 s. 2022, and other related laws and issuances.
- c. All public open spaces shall ensure safe routes going to and from its premises by mandating strict vehicle speed limits in roads connected to or surrounding the public open space, and maintaining park visibility during daylight hours and proper lighting at night; provided, that such lighting do not compromise the diurnal cycle of plants and animals present in the public open space.
- d. In communities where public open spaces are limited, existing lands or recreational areas in schools, museums, malls, government-owned buildings, or other similar properties may be opened up for such purposes through shared use agreements between the relevant entity and the local government.

2. *Child, elderly, persons with disability/ies, and pet-friendly*

- a. All public open spaces shall be sensitive and responsive to the needs of all its users, especially the children, elderly, and persons with limited physical mobility or other disabilities, in accordance with Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 Implementing Rules and Regulations, other related laws and issuances.
- b. Sidewalks, walking paths, pedestrian and crossing infrastructures, and other accessibility facilities shall be provided at grade. Materials that are tactile, not slippery when wet, well-lit, and that can provide high contrast shall be used in the development or enhancement of such spaces.
- c. All signages, controls, or nudges for way-finding shall be made visible with appropriate visual design, text and language (e.g. in Braille or in Filipino, as appropriate), and placed in conspicuous areas at suitable height for children and people in wheelchairs.
- d. Properly maintained public furniture, outdoor gym equipment, rest areas, benches, shades, ramps, and other similar features and amenities that are

easily located shall be provided for the elderly, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and families with children.

- e. Public open spaces shall, as applicable, provide appropriate, sanitary, and properly maintained breastfeeding and changing stations for mothers with infants or children.
 - f. A mix of open and well-ventilated enclosed spaces shall be provided, if possible, to allow users to select the kind of environment to experience, especially for persons with special needs such as those with autism and other neurodivergence, as well as those who are deaf or have hard of hearing, who may prefer more enclosed or secure facilities with less sensory information. Activities that are sensitive and responsive to the needs of hypersensitive and hyposensitive persons may also be made available.
 - g. Senior citizens, persons with disability, and pregnant women shall be provided with an express lane, or otherwise given priority.
 - h. Pets may be allowed in public open spaces, such as natural parks, subject to strict compliance with prescribed protocols and the parks' existing rules and regulations for visitors bringing their pets.
3. *Safe space for all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics*
- a. All public open spaces shall adopt a zero-tolerance policy against acts of gender-based streets and public spaces sexual harassment such as unwanted and uninvited sexual actions or remarks, wolf-whistling, catcalling, sexist, misogynistic, transphobic, and homophobic slurs, physical or verbal advances that threaten one's personal space, or such other acts as provided in Republic Act (RA) No. 11313 or the "Safe Spaces Act"
 - b. Interior security mechanisms to prevent and/or address such incidents shall be instituted in all public open spaces, which include installing of closed-circuit television (CCTV) and clearly visible warning signs with functional hotline or reporting line against gender-based sexual harassment, and designating appropriate anti-sexual harassment officer/s to assist and provide support to the victim, as applicable.
4. *Smoke-, vape-, drug-, and alcohol-free*
- a. All public open spaces, especially those frequented by the youth, families with children, and persons with co-morbidity, shall strictly enforce a "No Smoking and No Vaping Policy." No designated smoking or vaping area shall be harbored within the premises of the public open spaces.
 - b. Selling and advertising of tobacco or vape products within 100 meters from any point of the perimeter of the public open spaces frequented by minors shall not be allowed, in accordance with EO No. 26 s. 2017 and EO No. 106 s. 2020 providing for the establishment of smoke-free and vape-free environments in public and enclosed places.
 - c. Drinking, selling, and advertising, especially to minors, of alcoholic

beverages or other drinks with alcohol regardless of level of alcohol content shall not be allowed in public open spaces, including in outdoor food parks and farmers markets, in accordance with Food and Drug Administration Circular No. 2019-006 on Guidelines in the Commercial Display, Selling, Promotion, and Advertising of Alcohol.

- d. All public open spaces shall remain drug-free in compliance with RA No. 9165 or the "Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002," as amended, and other existing relevant policies.

5. *Promotive of handwashing and sanitation*

- a. Accessible, sufficient, and easily located sanitation facilities for personal hygiene, handwashing, and toilet use that provide privacy and security for its users shall be provided and properly maintained.
- b. In public open spaces with amenities or concessionaires for food and drinks, facilities for toilet and personal hygiene must not be connected directly or situated close to the kitchens. In relation to this, applicable standards for safe food preparation and safe drinking water shall at all times be observed.
- c. Pocket parks or parklets and other urban green spaces of relatively smaller scale, and thus with no necessity for dedicated sanitation facilities, shall ensure that as an alternative, a publicly available handwashing station, toilet, and restroom is accessible within 100 meters from its location.

6. *Eco-friendly, sustainable, and non-polluting*

- a. Development or enhancement of public open spaces shall, under no circumstance, destroy, displace, and/or contaminate existing natural habitat of local wildlife, forests, or agricultural domains.
- b. Development or enhancement of public open spaces shall consider greening strategies, and non-polluting landscape design features, such as green streetscape, appropriate lighting requirements that prevent light pollution, permeable landscape surfaces, etc.
- c. Public open spaces with water facilities like ponds, aquariums, fountains, or other related attractions, shall be designed to consume water efficiently and sparingly, and use harvested rainwater whenever possible.
- d. Proper waste management measures such as installation of visible signages and trash bins for segregated garbage in conspicuous locations, implementation of scheduled garbage collection and disposal, and careful management of face masks and other infectious wastes, shall be observed by the park administrators. Bringing and use of recyclable and reusable materials for food and drinks, where applicable, shall be promoted at all times to reduce wastes.

7. *Climate and disaster resilient*

- a. Public open spaces shall be developed with the aim of mitigating or reducing hazards and risks around its area.
- b. All identified public open spaces shall be suitable for use in accordance with the results of the LGU Climate and Disaster Risk Assessment (CDRA).
- c. Should the public open space be affected by any climate or disaster risk as identified in the LGU CDRA, an alternate area shall be considered. If no other areas are available, necessary adjustment and retrofitting in order to accommodate, manage, prevent, and mitigate the risks shall be employed.

8. *Promotive of local culture, arts, heritage, creativity, and biodiversity*

- a. Programming of amenities, attractions, and activities in public open spaces, especially those within the purview of the local governments, shall consider and accommodate the needs and cultural identities of the social groups in the community.
- b. Programming in public open spaces shall aim to promote cultural sensitivity, cultural and artistic expressions, cultural education and values, tangible and intangible heritage conservation and safeguarding, among others.
- c. Public open spaces shall, where applicable, protect, feature, and highlight native species of animals, insects, trees, and flora or vegetation.
- d. Public open spaces shall, where applicable and subject to appropriate planning and design, practice edible landscaping in support of existing urban agriculture programs and similar initiatives.

9. *Functional park management, enforcement, and maintenance*

- a. Public open spaces shall adhere, as applicable, to specific carrying capacity of the host community or locality where the concerned public open space is located.
- b. Public open spaces shall adopt appropriate environmental design principles that enable natural surveillance and natural access control that lead to safe, orderly, and enjoyable experiences for all its users. In relation to this, fences, walls, barriers, or other obstructions shall not be used at heights, positions, or with materials that hinder visibility, such that all persons within and on the periphery of the public open space are visible at all times.
- c. Regular and supervised programming of engaging and appropriate physical activity, sports, or recreational activities shall be facilitated to increase the utilization of public open spaces and the public's sense of community and organization.
- d. Public open spaces, especially those within the jurisdiction of national and local governments, shall have dedicated park administrators, recreation staff, rangers, capacitated medical staff and station for health emergency services that are linked to the local health system, and/or security officers (e.g. local

police unit, barangay volunteers, etc.) to enforce relevant park policies and provide safety and all other assistance to its users and visitors. Relative to this, adequately staffed helpdesks or similar mechanisms shall likewise be ensured.

B. Sustainability and financing of public open spaces

1. Resources at the national level shall be mobilized for the promotion, creation, and use of healthy public open spaces, as aligned with the respective functional mandates of the relevant national government agencies.
2. Likewise, resources at the local level shall be mobilized to support and maintain public parks and open spaces, in line with relevant provisions of RA No. 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991. The LGUs shall include as part of its local development plans the creation of healthy public open spaces or improvement of existing local public open spaces that are aligned with the provisions of this Order.
3. New financing mechanisms may be explored, including but not limited to public-private partnerships, benefit allocations, community fund-raising, or donations, to support the establishment of new or enhancement of existing public open spaces.
4. Privately-owned and managed open spaces may implement reasonable fees for the maintenance of their respective facilities.

C. Monitoring and evaluation

1. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the implementation of this Order shall be integrated in existing relevant governance or M&E mechanisms at the national and local levels. For this purpose, standards and indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of healthy public open spaces shall form part of the Healthy Communities Program of the DOH and its corresponding recognition mechanism for local government units.
2. The conduct of monitoring and evaluation activities related to specific provisions of the policy shall be the responsibility of the relevant actors (i.e. NGAs and/or LGUs) in charge of its implementation.
3. The status of the implementation of this Order shall be presented regularly to relevant agencies and other intersectoral bodies, as applicable, to inform their respective planning and implementation.

VIII. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Department of Health (DOH) shall:

1. Review, develop, and continue to update the set health and safety protocols based on most recent evidence available, and issue succeeding updates through appropriate policy issuances;

2. Provide technical assistance in developing inclusive health standards, protocols, and guidelines on the creation, promotion, and use of healthy public open spaces; and
3. Lead the overall monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the policy; In particular, monitor and evaluate relevant data or indicators on health and its risk factors in relation to the promotion and use of public open spaces.

B. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall:

1. Promote among LGUs the adoption of national policies, programs, and standards on the creation, promotion, and use of healthy public open spaces;
2. Encourage LGUs to create or designate areas as healthy public open spaces within their respective jurisdictions; and
3. Ensure that law enforcement agencies implement applicable safety policies, rules and regulations in public open spaces, including the full implementation and localization of RA No. 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act.

C. The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall:

1. Develop and/or encourage its relevant attached agencies (e.g. Intramuros Administration, National Parks Development Committee, TIEZA, etc.) to promulgate supplement guidelines for the operations of tourist attractions or other public open spaces within its area of jurisdiction;
2. Assist in the promotion of recreational activities being conducted in public open spaces within its area of jurisdiction; and
3. Provide technical assistance in the programming of supervised appropriate and culturally-relevant activities in public open spaces, where applicable.

D. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall:

1. Provide relevant environmental standards and technical assistance for the development and enhancement of public open spaces, especially green and blue spaces and lines;
2. Facilitate and process the application for environmental impact assessment of infrastructure or development projects related to public open spaces or such other spaces within the scope of this Order, as applicable; and
3. Monitor and evaluate environment-related data or indicators relevant to healthy public open spaces.

E. The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) shall:

1. Provide necessary technical assistance on environmental, land use, and urban planning and development in support of the creation of public open spaces;
2. Monitor the development of public open spaces relative to the preparation and implementation of comprehensive land use plans and zoning policies of local

government units to ensure that public open spaces follow the urban design parameters set in Section VII. A.

F. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall:

1. Include in its programs a special initiative to create healthy public open spaces in selected national roads and bridges;
2. Develop and promulgate guidelines and technical standards for creating healthy public open spaces in selected national roads and bridges or sections thereof by restricting their use to pedestrians, bicycles, and light mobility devices; and
3. Coordinate with LGUs for the creation of more public open space in cities and municipalities through the re-purposing of selected national and local roads and bridges for the exclusive use of pedestrians, bicycles and light mobility devices.

G. The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) shall provide necessary technical assistance for instituting safety mechanisms in public open spaces to address and/or respond to gender-based harassment on streets and public places, pursuant to Republic Act No. 11313 or the "Safe Spaces Act."

H. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) shall provide necessary technical assistance and support over public open spaces considered as heritage sites, and on promotion of arts and culture initiatives held on all public open spaces that uplift and empower communities, promote physical and mental health, and celebrate the people's diverse culture and heritage, subject to availability of funds, proper evaluation per requirements of existing grants system and government auditing rules and regulations.

I. The Local Government Units (LGUs) shall:

1. Review its existing urban, land use, environmental, and/or tourism plans to inform the creation, promotion, operations and use of public open spaces;
2. Provide necessary resources and infrastructure for provincial, city, municipal, or community public open spaces;
3. Incentivize the development of pocket parks and parklets in the community;
4. Ensure the proper implementation of the minimum public health standards in public open spaces;
5. Properly sustain and maintain provincial, city, municipal, or community public open spaces located in their jurisdiction;
6. Coordinate with the relevant NGAs in carrying out the provisions of this Order; and
7. Ensure immediate and widest dissemination of these guidelines to all units and sectors within their jurisdiction.

IX. REPEALING CLAUSE

Other related issuances not consistent with this Order are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly. All other existing issuances which are not affected by this Order shall remain valid and in effect.


X. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE


Should any provision of this Order or any part thereof be declared invalid, the other provisions, insofar as they are separable from the invalid ones, shall remain in full force and effect.

XI. EFFECTIVITY


The Order should take effect fifteen days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation and/or upon acknowledgement of a copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Registrar of the University of the Philippines Law Center.




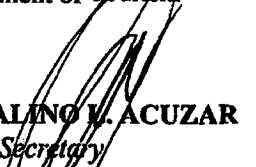

TEODORO V. HERBOSA
Secretary
Department of Health

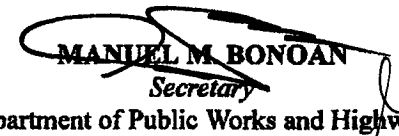

BENJAMIN C. ABALOS, JR.
Secretary
Department of the Interior and
Local Government




**MARIA ESPERANZA CHRISTINA
GARCIA-FRASCO**
Secretary
Department of Tourism


MARIA ANTONIA Y. BAYZAGA
Secretary
Department of Environment and
Natural Resources


JOSE RIZALINO L. ACUZAR
Secretary
Department of Human Settlements and
Urban Development


MANUEL M. BONOAN
Secretary
Department of Public Works and Highway


**KRISTINE ROSARY E.
YUZON-CHAVES**
Executive Director
Philippine Commission on Women


VICTORINO M. MANALO
Chairperson
National Commission for Culture
and the Arts

