

Healthy green spaces in and around the city

No. 2017/05

Executive summary

Health Council of the Netherlands



Recreation in green spaces is important for public health in the Netherlands. However, in recent decades, the opportunities for such recreation in and around the cities has not kept pace with the demand generated by a growing population. This population is also ageing and therefore has more time to relax outdoors. In this advisory report, the Health Council of the Netherlands recommends expanding the opportunities for 'green recreation' in the urban environment. In this context, 'green' refers to nature in

the broadest sense of the term, including bodies of water. The health of the Dutch population would benefit from an expansion of the opportunities for recreational activities in a natural environment in and around the cities. The Environmental and Planning Act makes it possible for municipalities to integrate such an expansion into vision documents and plans for a healthy, sustainable, and climate-proof city, including recreational water that is safe for the public.



The Health Council of the Netherlands, established in 1902, is an independent scientific advisory body. Its remit is “to advise the government and Parliament on the current level of knowledge with respect to public health issues and health (services) research...” (Section 22, Health Act).

The Health Council receives most requests for advice from the Ministers of Health, Welfare and Sport, Infrastructure and the Environment, Social Affairs and Employment, and Economic Affairs. The Council can publish advisory reports on its own initiative. It usually does this in order to ask attention for developments or trends that are thought to be relevant to government policy.

Most Health Council reports are prepared by multidisciplinary committees of Dutch or, sometimes, foreign experts, appointed in a personal capacity.

The reports are available to the public.

This report can be downloaded from www.healthcouncil.nl.

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