

although there are clearly differences between the city's spaces in terms of their management needs, apart from the large urban forests, all open spaces are classified as gardens. In Minneapolis, almost all urban open spaces are classified as local parks, and rather than a hierarchy of open spaces, the Minneapolis park system is centred around a system of trails, paths and roadways incorporating several lakes, parks and both banks of the Mississippi.

Most typologies represent non-statutory, locally derived systems inspired by local contexts and open space types and often by management convenience. Occasionally, however, systems are based on nationally created typologies. In Curitiba, for example, the local open spaces classification was revised through municipal legislation in 2000 in line with federal legislation of the same year in order to better control the development of unsuitable land and protect existing open space; particular problems in a city subject to squatter settlements. In Japan the public open space typology is defined nationally on the basis of size, location and function as part of a national policy to provide various kinds of open space within walking distance of residential areas. In New Zealand, the Reserves Act of 1972 requires all reserves to be classified according to purpose (recreation, historic, scenic, nature, scientific, government, or local). However, under this broad classification, most councils have their own more detailed breakdown of types, determined mainly for operational management purposes.

Open space ownership

With relatively few exceptions, most public open space in the eleven cities is owned and managed by the state and, in the main, this ownership is exercised through local government in various guises. The exceptions to local government ownership and management include open space controlled by national or regional government because of its present or past strategic nature. Open space along major roads, riverbanks, canals, and other waterways often fall into this category. Similarly, culturally and/or historically important parks and gardens are often owned and managed by the national government, frequently by historic accident, as is the case with a number of key Parisian parks. Public open space within post-war housing estates is also an exception, as in many places it is owned and managed by housing corporations and not local government. This is the case in Malmö and also in Groningen, where local housing corporations also manage the neighbourhood parks. In some of the cities there are also spaces managed directly by user communities themselves. In Minneapolis, for example, a number of community gardens are owned and managed by a coalition of not-for-profit organisations, whereas in Tokyo, the management of small public green spaces have recently been taken on board by voluntary organisations.

A number of innovative practices with regard to ownership and legal responsibility can be highlighted. First, the dissociation of ownership and management, for example in Hannover, where the banks of the Mittellandkanal are owned by the state but managed by the city, as are a number of privately owned forests with public access. This arrangement brings with it distinct benefits by allowing the management of these spaces to be coordinated by the city and with that of other local open spaces. In Groningen, all nationally owned space is managed locally by the municipality, and offers similar benefits.

Second, is the practice of temporary ownership for park use. In Tokyo, the Urban Park Act of 2003 allowed temporary open spaces to be created on unused private land and even on private structures, for example in the form of roof gardens. In essence, the legislation establishes a right of use separate from ownership, and the resulting spaces are managed by local government on the basis of flexible contracts established for specified periods of time between the local authority and the owner (see Box 7.1).

Third is the specific case of Minneapolis, where the management of urban parks along with the larger regional parks, parkways, boulevards and trails falls under the authority of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). This is an independent elected board with law-making and tax-raising powers, which manages 30 regional and 140 neighbourhood parks, plus 49 recreation centres and 43 miles of bike trails in Minnesota. Some smaller open spaces along rights of way and adjacent to buildings are owned and managed by the City of Minneapolis, but in essence the board represents an independent form of local government dedicated to the provision and management of public open space.

Finally, there are examples of focused arm's-length local government agencies, set up specifically to manage public open space on behalf of local government. In Tokyo, the majority of parks are managed by the Tokyo Park Association, a public corporation with a dedicated remit. In Melbourne, all open space is crown land, but Parks Victoria manages much of it, amounting to a network of 37 metropolitan parks, the recreational aspects of Melbourne's major waterways and the trails network throughout the city. By contrast, the City of Melbourne is responsible for a much smaller amount of open space in and around the city centre. Parks Victoria was created in 1966 from the amalgamation of state and municipal agencies, and given legal status as a statutory authority providing services to the state and its agencies for the management of parks, reserves and waterways on public land. In addition to urban parkland, Parks Victoria manages national and state parks around the metropolitan fringe, and, like the Tokyo Park Association and Minneapolis' MPRB, is able to focus on this task alone.