

As global urbanization accelerates, the active cities and communities require interventions that are scalable, inclusive and economically efficient. Flying Disc Sports, specifically the disciplines of Disc Golf and Ultimate, have transitioned from niche recreational activities to high-impact public health tools and one of the fastest-growing sports in the world. This document outlines how these disciplines offer a unique dividend of:

1. **Health:** A proven mechanism for reducing sedentary behaviors and mortality through increased daily step counts and "green exercise."
2. **Economics:** The highest cost-to-benefit ratio of municipal sports, generating significant "consumer surplus" for cities.
3. **Environment:** A strategic tool for reclaiming "dead" urban infrastructure and funding conservation.



Combating the Sedentary Crisis

An active city must prioritize activities that naturally promote movement without high barriers to entry. Flying Disc Sports provide a verifiable solution to the inactivity epidemic.

Playing a standard 18-holes of Disc Golf necessitates approximately 5,000 to 7,000 steps (approximately 3.5 to 5.5 kilometers) over 90 minutes. This single activity exceeds the threshold for significant life-extension benefits, making it a high-yield public health intervention.

A single game of Ultimate requires participants to run, jog, and sprint and burns approximately 477 calories and helps participants reach heart rates 82% of their maximum, resulting in a higher aerobic capacity and resting blood pressure.

Recent research in Finland highlighted that Disc Golf drives active transportation habits, with 47% of participants traveling to courses on foot or by bicycle.

The average distance to a Disc Golf course is 3.7 km, supporting the "15-minute city" urban planning model where recreation is hyper-local and access is car-free.

Flying Disc Sports are found to significantly enhance motor skills such as throwing, pivoting and jumping in participants.

Flying Disc Sports are gaining popularity among children and youth due to the sports' uniqueness and participant enjoyment. A 2020 study found that the sport is the second most requested activity for 14- to 16 year-old boys in Finland.

A survey in Finland found that 1 in 3 adults aged 18 to 29 years old are interested in the sport, demonstrating its power to retain young adults in active lifestyles during typical dropout years.



A Sport for Everyone

Flying Disc Sports remove the traditional barriers of class, age and ability.

The low-impact nature of the sport allows for a lifetime participation model. Disc Golf is one of the few sports where grandparents can compete alongside grandchildren, fostering family cohesion; participants' age ranges are typically from 4 to over 80 years of age.

The sports' rules create an inclusive environment, being non-contact and commonly played mixed-gender, from the grassroots to elite levels.

With minimal equipment requirements and the elite-level discs costing as little as \$10, and with almost 90% of courses being free to play, the sport eliminates the "pay-to-play" barrier common in sports like tennis or ball golf. This ensures low-income participants have equal access to high-quality recreation.

The sport requires minimal adaptations for participants with disabilities with no use of specialized equipment and can be played in an integrated fashion.

The sports' active participants support welcoming new participants; 87% of current participants reported introducing the sport to someone new in the past year.



Capital Investment, Public Parks and Smart Use of Land

Flying Disc Sports require significantly lower initial capital investment than traditional sports. Unlike court or field sports, which necessitate expensive grading, concrete pouring and synthetic surfacing, Disc Golf for example, utilizes existing topography.

Unlike soccer or baseball, which require large, flat, manicured fields, Disc Golf thrives in the woods, on slopes, in floodplains and other marginal land unsuitable for other uses. This allows cities to monetize and activate land that would otherwise generate zero value. Courses can be created in the "buffer zones" of parks, such as areas too rough for picnics or walking paths, transforming underutilized acreage into active recreation space without displacing other users.

Introducing Disc Golf to secluded or wooded areas of a park increases legitimate foot traffic. This "passive surveillance" deters illegal dumping, vandalism and encampments, making the park safer for all users.

Considering Ultimate, it is played in large open grassed spaces or on existing soccer or football fields, requiring no new infrastructure, only distinct line markings or cones.

According to research in Finland, Disc Golf demonstrates the lowest cost per user of any municipal sport facility, considering the initial creation and ongoing maintenance (as it requires no expensive irrigation, lighting or stadium infrastructure).

The significant majority of Disc Golf courses are installed in public parks. Modern course design prioritizes safety corridors. By routing fairways away from high-traffic walking paths and playgrounds, the sport coexists seamlessly with other park users without any safety risks.

There exist several other case studies where cities activate desolate spaces that are otherwise useless for development, including landfills, quarries, and hydro corridors, or repurpose neglected spaces such as ski areas in the summer months and campsites.



Spirit of the Game: A Framework for Social Governance

Unlike traditional sports that rely on external authority like referees, Flying Disc Sports are built on Spirit of the Game, a system of self-officiating that places the responsibility for fair play directly on the participants.

By removing the referee, participants are forced to communicate, negotiate and resolve disputes in real time. This builds critical social-emotional skills, particularly in youth, fostering empathy and integrity that transfer off the field.

The sport's structure supports mixed-gender divisions across all levels of competition. This promotes gender equity and mutual respect, creating a uniquely inclusive community atmosphere often missing in segregated sports.

The ethos of Spirit of the Game extends to the physical environment; the "Spirit" mindset encourages players to act as stewards of the sport and course, leading to high rates of volunteerism for coaching, maintenance and litter removal.



Economic Case of High Value and Low Cost

With competing priorities and constrained municipal budgets, Flying Disc Sports represent a fiscally responsible investment to create active cities.

While 89% of Disc Golf courses are free to play, they have a better return on investment for participation compared to other sports.

At a single time, more than 70 participants can play on an 18-hole Disc Golf course; with an average round of 100 minutes, more than 550 participants can access a course per day.

Research on New York City-area courses found that the recreational value to the user is approximately \$70 per round, generating millions in annual social value.

The sport stimulates tourism; 88% of Disc Golf participants travelled over 30 km for a round of Disc Golf with 58% taking a Disc Golf-specific trip.

More than 80,000 leagues were run worldwide through the leading free mobile application and there were over 14,000 Ultimate events sanctioned.

Hosting events at the local, national and international levels in the sport has also stimulated the economy. The 2018 Ultimate World Championships generated an income of \$10.5 million with 14,800 room nights and an average visitor spend of \$2,000. Local Disc Golf Championships have seen a similar proportional impact of \$200,000.



Conclusion

Flying Disc Sports are not merely recreational pastimes; they are high-efficiency infrastructure for the modern active city. By embedding the Spirit of the Game into public life, they cultivate better citizens. By utilizing marginal land, they preserve nature. By offering low-cost access, they ensure health equity. They are the cornerstone of a sustainable, active and inclusive urban future.



About WFDF

The World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) is the international sports federation responsible for governance of Flying Disc Sports, including the disciplines of Disc Golf and Ultimate, among other emerging disciplines, with 126 National Federations across all continents.

WFDF is an international federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee and other key international bodies.

WFDF is a signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code and is a registered not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation in the state of Colorado, USA.

WFDF's mission is to "support and promote the inclusive growth and development of all Flying Disc Sports and Spirit of the Game."



WFDF's values are:

- **Disc Sports Continuum:** A lifetime of the Disc Sports lifestyle; WFDF believes that Flying Disc Sports are accessible over an entire lifetime. Moreover, there is a lifestyle aspect and culture that is embraced by all participants.
- **Spirit of the Game:** Flying Disc Sports rely upon the Spirit of the Game that places the responsibility for fair play on every participant. This concept is at the heart of the rules of each discipline and our governance structure, incorporating elements of integrity and respect.
- **Passion:** Flying Disc Sports participants have a passionate enthusiasm for the sport. All of our disciplines generate excitement, emotional attachment and a sense of belonging to the global community.
- **Community:** Flying Disc Sports provides a unifying spirit that leads to lifelong friendships, camaraderie, teamwork and loyalty which transcends cultural, geographic, political and religious differences.
- **Inclusiveness:** WFDF fully supports diversity and inclusion in our sports and organization. WFDF, as well as its national federations actively promotes participation and accessibility with regard to race, color, religion, ability, national origin, gender and sexual orientation.

Additional Information



Website www.wfdf.sport



Social Media www.facebook.com/worldflyingdisc
www.instagram.com/worldflyingdisc



Contact Dillon Richardson
Director of Membership Services and Sport Development
dillon.richardson@wfdf.sport