

# Focus on CSIR research in Social Facilities and Recreational Spaces

CSIR Built Environment  
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## Guidelines

The CSIR has been developing guidelines for access norms and threshold standards to facilitate the planning of social facilities and recreational spaces in urban areas. These guidelines and standards assist local authority planners in developing well-provisioned and planned human settlements that are fully functional.

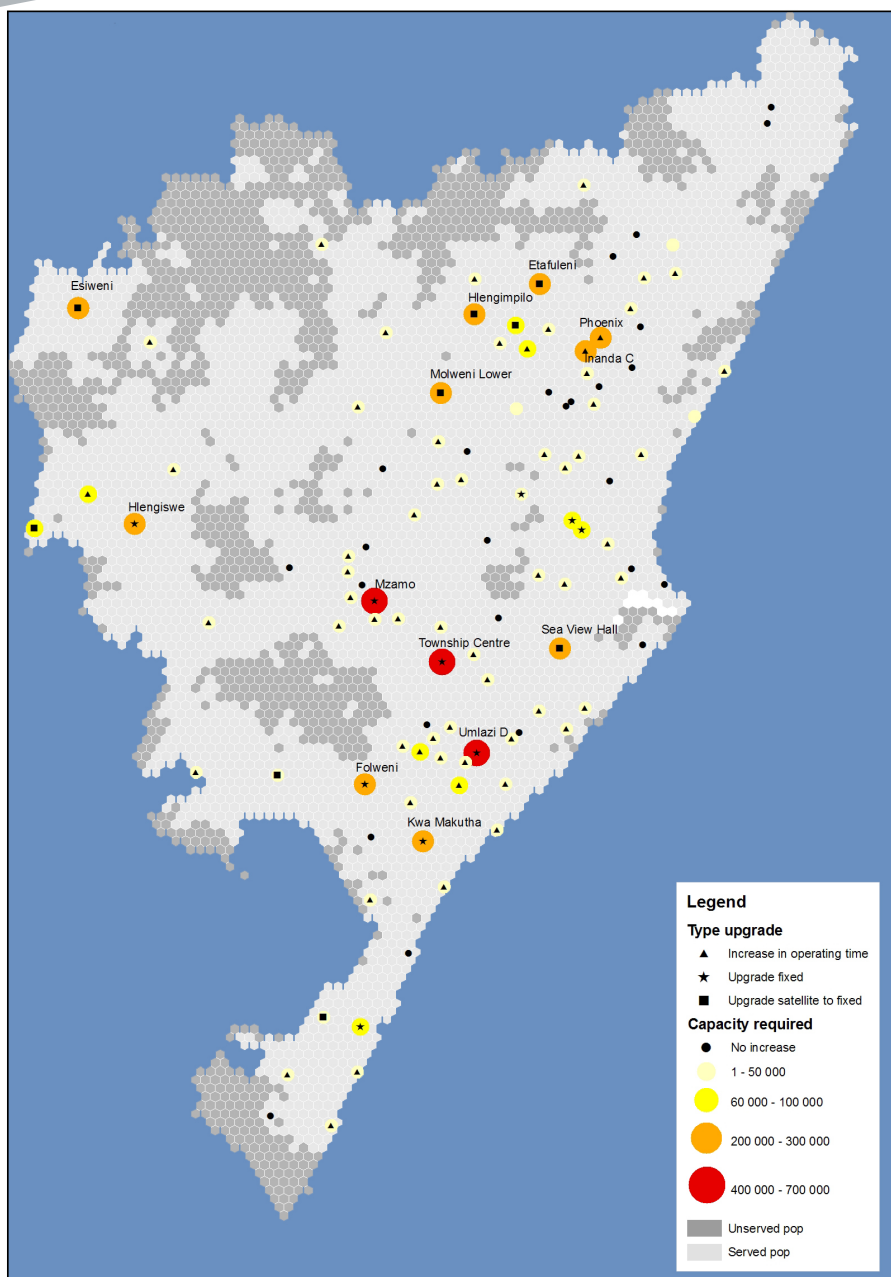
The range of social facilities covered includes education, health, sports facilities, libraries, community halls, cemeteries and parks.

The CSIR has been commissioned over the past three years to assist the metropolitan areas of eThekweni and Cape Town in developing specific facility standards applicable in those areas.

Following its experience in this field, the CSIR has published a summarised set of standards and guidelines for the threshold and access norms for the provision and development of social facilities and recreational spaces in metropolitan areas [http://www.csir.co.za/Built\\_environment/Guidelines\\_Standards.html](http://www.csir.co.za/Built_environment/Guidelines_Standards.html).

CSIR researchers will review the standards and guidelines information regularly, as it is a document in progress. It is not intended as a prescriptive 'blue-print' planning guideline source, but rather provides standards to measure and compare levels of provision to determine current and future facility needs and to use as a starting point for provision at a pre-feasibility planning stage.

Standards are provided mainly in terms of demand thresholds (number of people served) and access norms regarding



Proposed health facility upgrades matching capacity to local demand - eThekweni Municipal area

desirable travel time/distance as well as some traditionally-used site sizes. The latter must be customised for the local settlement context. The guidelines are derived from both local contexts as well as a review of international practice.

The guidelines and standards on the size and location of facilities to be provided should be used as the starting point for planning; consultation with local communities is essential. Furthermore, a thorough investigation of the existing facilities and their current usage levels needs to be made in conjunction with the density of development and the number of people within the facility catchment area. Based on systematic planning and consultation with the responsible line departments, recommendations to deviate from the norms to occupy less land should be made for implementation.

Effective delivery of services requires more than a good location and will always depend on to the quality of facility design and capacity, number of staff and range of facilities provided. Operational issues including competency of staff and facility maintenance are also essential.

The guidelines developed by the CSIR can be applied for:

- Forward planning (for allocation of scarce land and limited capital budgets);
- Development control (number and scale of facilities needed, and site requirements);
- Plan implementation (a yardstick to measure sufficiency or need for facilities);
- Improving quality of life (full range of facilities and recreational spaces accessible to communities).

Normative standards outlined in the CSIR document could:

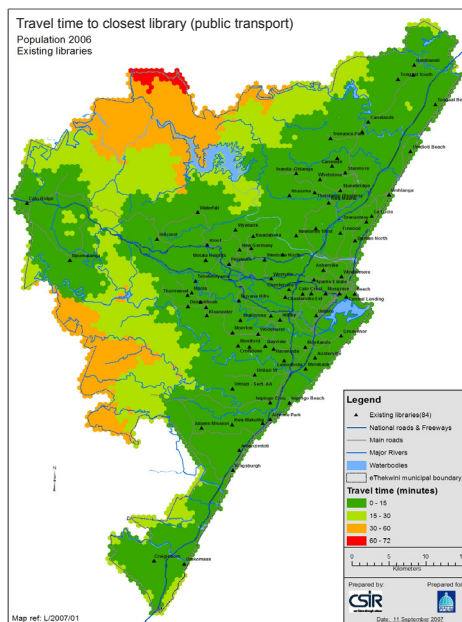
- Determine the number of facilities and basic land required in relation to the population demand/thresholds;
- Inform negotiations on land provision between developers and the city;
- Form the basis for developing a spatial distribution network for a facility;
- Provide input when prioritising capital investment based on backlog.



These standards are a strategic guide for space allocation of facilities at neighbourhood, district and metropolitan scales and can be used for motivating for new facility requirements and investment.

### Space Planner

The CSIR has furthermore developed the Space Planner, which can be used to calculate a set of facility requirements for new or existing housing developments. The Space Planner is available at <http://spaceplanner.csir.co.za>.



### Related Resources

#### Accessibility analysis

The Space Planner is not a spatial tool; to evaluate the relationship between facility location, size, target market and travel distance, a more sophisticated approach is required. For more details on this, see [www.csir.co.za/Built\\_environment/Planning\\_support\\_systems/docs/poster55\\_lowres.pdf](http://www.csir.co.za/Built_environment/Planning_support_systems/docs/poster55_lowres.pdf)

#### Red Book

For detailed planning of neighbourhoods, one should also consult the guidelines for the development of individual facilities as outlined in the 'Guidelines for Human Settlement Planning and Design', commonly known as the Red Book (see [www.csir.co.za/Built\\_environment/RedBook](http://www.csir.co.za/Built_environment/RedBook))

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