

NEW LEINELÄ – A HOUSING AREA IN THE FOREST

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Abstract

City of Vantaa is situated in the metropolitan area of Helsinki, and it is one of the largest cities in Finland with 190 000 residents. The city has some 4 000 hectares of woodland, which is mainly used for recreational purposes. Vantaa is a founding member of the European Forum of Urban Forestry, and it has been an active member in the Forum from the beginning.

This presentation is not based on any research work; instead it is a case about suspicious land use policy and the process of planning a new housing area in the middle of existing recreational woodland. A wider frame for the case is the development of the metropolitan area of Helsinki as a swift growing center of Finland.

There was a great demand for more houses because of the work related migration. Vantaa had an outstanding position as an international airport city. The infrastructure of the airport and the new housing areas was to be developed simultaneously. The development required more space, and the land for the purpose was cut away from the recreational woodlands, thus lessening the recreational, ecological and landscape values of the forest. The new values, such as more people, sufficient logistics, economy, international interaction was taking over. The question was: How to minimize the damages of the development and maintain as much as possible of previous values? This challenge was handed over **the urban foresters** among others. The city was a major landowner of the forest about 50 hectares in size. It had been used as a recreational area by 30 000 people living in the surrounding housing areas, for there were frequently used walking paths and winter skiing-routes. The new area, *Leinelä* provides homes for 3 000 new inhabitants.

The presentation is an example 1) of the dialogue between urban forests and urban planning and 2) of land use policy and recreation opportunities.

The aim of the presentation is to show the congress audience

- the national and international goals of the land use policy in the area.
- the possibilities of how to exploit old woodlands in the development process.
- how to deal with the resistance of the residents living in surrounding neighbourhoods with interaction and dialogue during the process.
- the means of exercising trees in the new situation - as standing structure in streets and squares, parks and gardens.
- how to take account the nature values.
- how to secure the circumstances for outdoor life and recreation.

Key Words

land use policy, urban forest, recreation values, landscape values, nature values