

SOCIAL INFORMATION TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF URBAN FORESTS

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Abstract

To promote the developing of sustainable city regions, ecological and social values of the environment need to be integrated in planning and decision making concerning urban forests. For instance, supporting the health of residents by urban forest planning requires qualitative and quantitative information on values residents relate to their living environment (see Tyrväinen et al. 2005). Modern technologies have enabled the development of new tools, helping in collecting and presenting such social information in planning and decision making processes.

How, in fact, can planners and decision makers use the social information? What do residents and other stakeholders gain from public participation in urban forest planning? How can collaborative planning processes be organized effectively and efficiently from the point of view of well-informed and sustainable use of urban forests?

In a sub-study of the research project 'GREENDECISION - Integrating ecological and social information in urban planning' (Academy of Finland 2006-2008), we are studying these questions in two case areas in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. By combining different methods of qualitative research, we have developed a framework and a practical "tool" for evaluating collaborative land use and urban forest planning processes in terms of use of social information. Results will be presented on grounds of semi-structured personal interviews and focus groups carried out with 33 planners, decision makers, residents and landowners in 2007-2008, as well as of the testing of the evaluation "tool", ongoing in spring 2008.

Key Words

Social information, urban forest planning, urban planning, collaborative planning

Key References

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