“Without ecological health there can be no human health”. What does this mean for urban design?

Landscape’s impact on health and well-being: is Friluftsliv enough?

Gayle Souter-Brown, 2015
Public Health Focus

“The analysis is simple; how do we get more health for the money we spend?”
Minister of Health 2009

1. Mental health (addictions, depression)
2. Mental well-being (stress, anxiety)
3. Cognitive ability (age)
4. Memory
5. Obesity & diabetes
6. Coronary and upper respiratory health
The benefits

• Health equity

• Public health problems like drug abuse or dementia are precursors to mental health and well-being in a broader sense

• Cultural participation is improved
Who most benefits?

• Hard to reach target groups – low education, low income, poor health statistics

• Young, elderly, immigrants, stressed workers, disabled
Urban design delivers

• Connections

• Accessible greenspace

• Public space

• Private space

• Commercial space
The evidence behind the positive effects of designed landscapes,


• Learning through landscapes National School Grounds Survey 2003

Time - cost - value

- “Preventative policies and interventions for things like cardiovascular disease take 20 years to show their effect. If we are going to make a difference we need to start now and take a long term view. We will always need hospitals and a robust healthcare system, but for prevention, lifestyle factors make an enormous difference.” (Franklin, 2013)
Effective methods and approaches

1

- **Auditing your outdoor spaces.** An audit tool can quickly and reliably collect data on the condition, suitability and use of external spaces.

- **Low cost, high value interventions** utilise environmental design interventions
Effective methods and approaches

2

- Case study: Street trees – Toronto, *Nature*
  5, Article number: 11610 (2015)

- The more trees on your neighbourhood street, the healthier you're likely to be

- Having 10 more trees on your street has self-reported health benefits equivalent to a NOK 61,000 salary raise, moving to a neighbourhood with a NOK 61,000 higher median income or being seven years younger.

- Toronto’s trees cover 26 to 28 per cent of the city. But they aren’t evenly spread.

- It costs the city NOK 441, on average, to buy and plant a tree.
Support for the tendering process

• Procurement teams need assistance to develop robust specifications for the health value of outside spaces

• It is not enough to develop a park and hope people will come
The future of public health

• “There is growing evidence that mental well-being is a key pathway through which inequalities impact on health.

• The importance of mental health and well-being is directly and indirectly related at every level to human responses to inequalities” (Friedli 2009)

• A salutogenic design approach
Conclusions

1. For human health and wellbeing we need a salutogenic design approach

2. Urban street trees and accessible greenspace meet that need

3. We get more health for the money spent when health authorities form diverse, inclusive partnerships, foster openness, and collaborate on goals and outcomes.
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“Healing gardens heal communities. They boost not only local aesthetics, local biodiversity and improve the mood of the people, they help build sustainable communities. They are specifically designed to enhance mental and physical health”.