



LIVEABLE CITIES

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES – Healthy Living Landscape Solutions

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Introduction

While there is an enormous body of anecdotal evidence for the healing powers of nature, research is putting evidentiary weight behind the contention¹. This growing body of research shows a connection between our health and wellbeing and the design and structure of our built environment.² Policy makers and designers must now account for this evidence in their work.

Research has found that access to nature, whether it is bona fide natural areas, urban parks or even green views, impacts psychological and physical health and social functioning. Increasing access to views and environments brings health benefits such as:

- better cognitive functioning;
- greater self-discipline and impulse control;
- improved mental health overall; and
- greater resilience in response to stressful life events.³

AILA Position

AILA advocates that government policy must quantify and qualify the development of high quality open space that focuses on the health of our communities.

AILA contends that landscape architects are uniquely positioned to provide essential input into this process. Landscape architects play a key role in the early stages of project planning. Whether it be a specific site or planning on a broad scale, landscape architects are able to provide an integrated approach to healthy communities. The holistic approach required to design and develop successful healthy communities considering such elements as orientation, views, amenity, wayfinding, sunlight for health and growing conditions for trees, can only be provided by landscape architects.

¹ Frances E. (Ming) Kuo; Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat 2010 p.3
² <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/why.php> Accessed: 14 Dec 2014
³ Frances E. (Ming) Kuo; Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat 2010 p.4

Key issues

Policy makers must insist that all planning addresses community health by encouraging quality, well-integrated open space. It is critical to have a strategic approach across all levels of government and administration:

- Federal governments – because the consequences of unhealthy communities place an ever-increasing burden on the health and welfare systems;
- State governments – because a focus on healthy communities reduces impacts on health services in the first place;
- Local governments – because local governments are the ongoing managers of and advocates for sustainable open space;
- Private and public health providers – because the overwhelming body of research now shows that access to green spaces lessens time spent in hospitals.

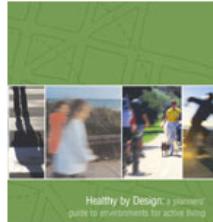
Planning policy must insist upon a sustainable and quality approach to open space design and planning which integrates with the following:

- active transport
- aesthetics
- connectivity
- environments for all people
- mixed density
- mixed land use
- parks and open space
- safety and surveillance
- social inclusion
- amenity
- supporting infrastructure ⁴

⁴ <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/design.php> Accessed: 14 Dec 2014



Case Studies



Healthy by Design, Victoria

“Healthy by Design: a planner’s guide to environments for active living” was developed by the Heart Foundation (Victorian Division) in 2004 and redesigned in 2012. The resource recognises the significant health implications of planning decisions, and aims to assist planners to create built environments that support physical activity, particularly through provision for active transport.”

Source: <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/casestudies.php?task=show&id=9>



Wollongong Walkability Index Tool Initiative

“The Walkability Index Tool Initiative (a joint initiative of Wollongong and Shellharbour City Councils) involved the development of a tool to measure the walkability of a study area against nine socio-environmental characteristics. The walkability score of a study area assists infrastructure planners to prioritise footpath and infrastructure works. Provision of footpaths assists with achieving safe, connected and walkable neighbourhoods.”

Source: <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/casestudies.php?task=show&id=52>

Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Singapore

Set amidst verdant landscape and soothing water features, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH) is both “a hospital in a garden” and “a garden in a hospital”.



Source:

Terrace and roof gardens and therapeutic green spaces provide calming surroundings that soothe and rejuvenate. The citrus and edible gardens also provide an organic source of herbs and spices for the hospital’s garden.

“A Healing Space: Creating Biodiversity at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital” was launched by Professor Tommy Koh, Singapore’s Ambassador-at-Large, on 19 February 2013, at KTPH. This 76-page book was conceptualised and developed in conjunction with several of our volunteers who were actively involved in the planning and design of the gardens and pond. With their generous contribution, we were able to chronicle the efforts in creating a healing environment, mitigating biodiversity loss, and place-making for community activities.

Source of image & information: https://www.ktph.com.sg/main/explore_ktph_pages/232/A_Healing_Environment



Theater Commons and Donnelly Gardens, Seattle, USA

Theater Commons and Donnelly Gardens is a highly visible sustainable demonstration project at a major entry to Seattle Center, a 74-acre urban park and cultural/arts centre in downtown Seattle. The design transformed an existing 1.6 acre parking lot, service road, and isolated lawn area between the Intiman and Repertory Theatres into a welcoming, green, and pedestrian-focused entry for the Seattle Center campus. The site is used on a regular basis by visitors, staff and theater patrons, and during the many outdoor festivals that Seattle Center hosts throughout the year.

Source of image & information:: <http://www.sustainablesites.org/certified-sites/theatercommons>



Source: <http://www.sustainablesites.org/certified-sites/theatercommons>

Brooklyn Bridge Park, USA

"The Brooklyn Bridge Park (BBP) site extends 1.3 miles along the East River on a defunct cargo shipping and storage complex. The ambitious park design sought to transform this environmentally hostile site into a thriving civic landscape while preserving the dramatic experience of the industrial waterfront. This site also presented excellent opportunities including its adjacency to two thriving residential communities and its unparalleled views to the fabled Lower Manhattan skyline."

Source of image & information:: <http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org/pages/parkdesign>

<http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org/>



Supporting research/links

Healthy Places and Spaces: <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/index.php>

American Institute of Landscape Architects, Professional Practice: <http://www.asla.org/healthbenefitsofnature.aspx>

Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat Research Paper: http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/MingKuo-Research-Paper.pdf

Designing Healthy Communities: <http://designinghealthycommunities.org/>

CABE Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/community-green-full-report.pdf>

CABE Future health Sustainable places for health and well-being: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/future-health-full-report_0.pdf

Other position statements

List other position statements that are relevant to this area

Further information

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