

Envisioning Resilience: Principles For Creating Urban Greenspaces That Adapt To Change

Mentor: Veronika Valk-Siska

Co-mentor: Kristi Grišakov

Author: Martin Allik

Affiliation: TalTech (Estonia), MARELD landskapsarkitekter (Sweden)

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This thesis investigates how ecological resilience of urban greenspaces can be increased by an evidence-based design process and the landscape architect expanding its role throughout the design and construction phases. It defines principles how the ecological value of new urban greenspaces can be raised.

In urban landscapes, ecology can't be isolated from societal and/or cultural factors. Therefore, creating ecological resilience while maintaining societal and cultural significance in an era of rapid change is a formidable task. These changes can be of various type and impact such as passing architectural trends, changing maintenance routines, changing policies and politics, budget cuts, urban densification and sprawl or both predictable and unpredictable weather phenomenon caused by climate change. The success of an urban habitat, a fundamental aspect in any resilient greenspace, is coupled to aesthetics, perception, maintenance, and foremost to adaptability.

This thesis is based on five case studies. Three completed projects, Briggen Passage, Entrance Park and Shoreline Park are situated in Gothenburg, Sweden. Play & Learn Park is a project in late design stage (as of December 2019) and is set to be opened in June 2021 as part of Gothenburg's 400th anniversary celebrations. An additional fifth project, yet to be named and located, will be designed and built as part of this thesis. The latter will provide a feedback loop to the tools synthesized from the first four case studies.

The thesis critically analyses both the success and shortcomings of the case studies. Though every site is unique with its specific challenges, the tools proposed in the thesis create a backbone to a successful process and establish the right preconditions for creation of resilient urban greenspaces. The proposed design process is firmly grounded on research, statistics and previous experience of both the author and other architects, and experts from other disciplines. This is combined with a series of user workshops, workshops with maintenance staff and municipal employees, and active participation in the building process.