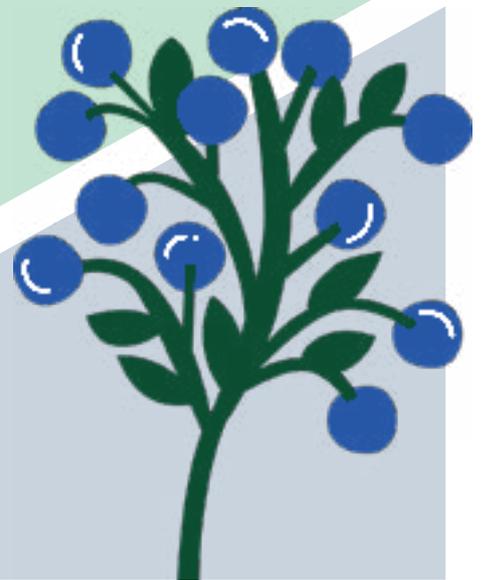


# Espoo´s Integrated Action Plan for health-responsive blue-green infrastructure

Health&Greenspace 2022



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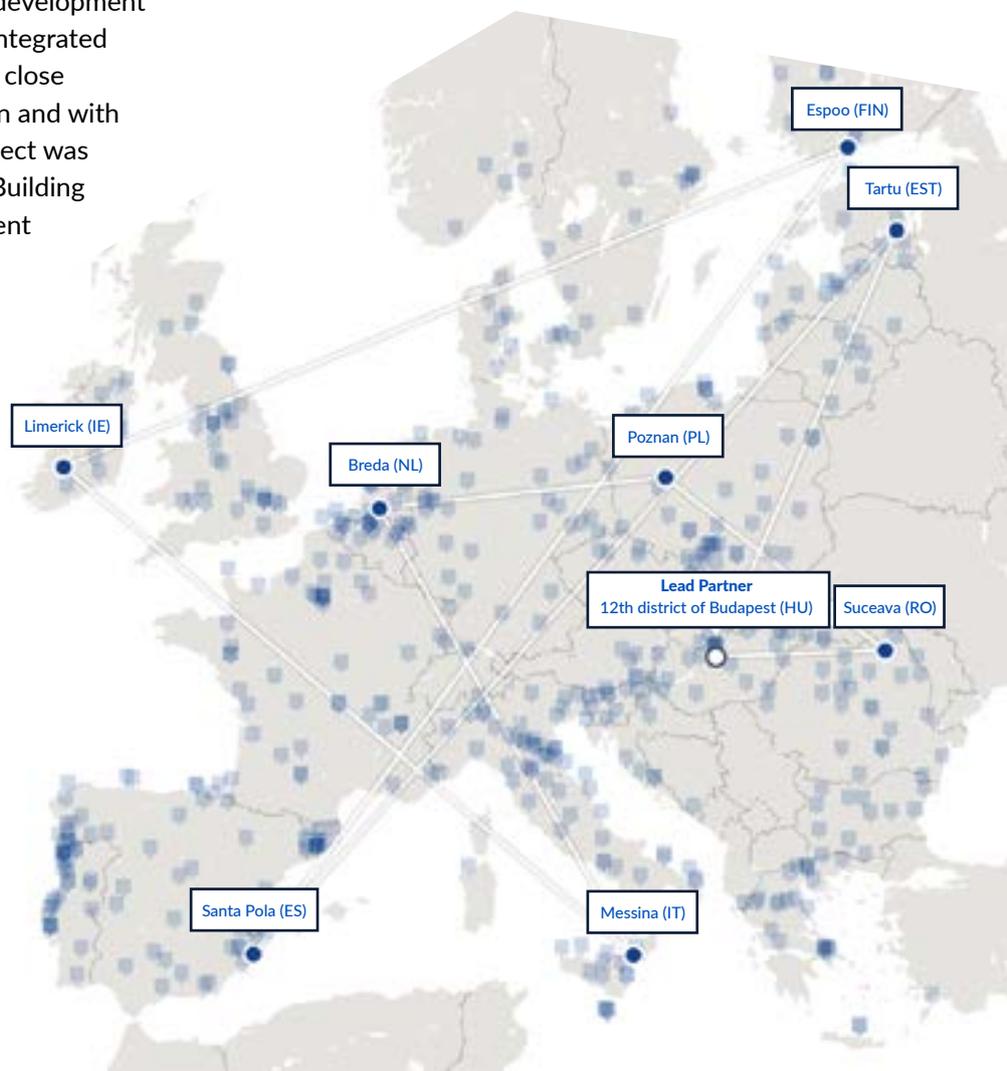
# URBACT Health&Greenspace

This Integrated Action Plan was drawn in the Health&Greenspace project, in which the City of Espoo participated in 2019–2022 together with eight other European cities. In the Health&Greenspace project, the cities aimed to improve urban greenspaces in order to promote mental and physical health and social interaction in green spaces. The project also investigated how vegetation in the urban environment can respond to various health risks, such as heat stress or air and noise pollution in cities. As part of the EU-funded URBACT programme, the project furthers integrated and sustainable development in the European cities. The Health&Greenspace project is an Action Planning Network (APN), which aims for transnational exchange and learning and, through that, improving local policies through actions.

The Integrated Action Plan is the main outcome of an Action Planning Network formed by each partner city. The Integrated Action Plan of Espoo describes the current policy context in Espoo and how the City of Espoo is working for health-responsive blue-green infrastructure. The actions in the Integrated Action Plan will direct the future work towards integrated urban development and healthy urban environments. The Integrated Action Plan in Espoo was conducted in close cooperation within the city organisation and with the local community. In Espoo, the project was administered by the Environment and Building Control Department (former Environment Department).

## Make nature the heartbeat of your city

*Health&Greenspace project is a transnational network of 9 European cities. It connects the planning and management of the urban blue-green infrastructure with practices and services, which promote the health and well-being of the residents. Actions generated by the partnering cities are linked to both physical changes to the urban environment and the promotion of social activities such as community, cultural, education and physical activity programmes in green areas.*



# Foreword

Espoo is a network city of five urban centres and local centres. In the coming years, it will continue to grow and become denser around these thriving centres. Espoo's local nature is a vital resource for the city residents and will be secured together with services and the vitality of the city.

In the 'My Espoo on the Map survey' conducted in autumn 2020, Espoo residents shared their views on what their hometown looks and feels like in their daily lives. Based on the results of this comprehensive survey, Espoo residents enjoy living surrounded by nature and greenery. Cosy meeting places and leisure services bring life to the city and its nature destinations. The survey highlighted Espoo's values, one of the most frequently mentioned of which is caring for our local nature. Espoo residents of all ages and conditions are already familiar with many of Espoo's fine nature destinations and diverse green areas, and spend time in nature often and responsibly.

## **Espoo is a responsible and international pioneer**

As a city, Espoo strives to act open-mindedly, creatively and openly. For us Espoo residents, this means questioning current ways of doing things and having the courage to do things in a new way. In our practical work, this goal is achieved by ensuring that the city's operating methods are based on studied information and on continuing to learn from the best international examples.

In order to promote a comfortable, safe and healthy urban environment, Espoo strives to increase information and good practices in many different ways so that both the quantity and quality of local nature can be safeguarded. Our pioneers are engaged in this work together. The current action plan is an excellent example of how the city staff is working together across sectoral boundaries to develop the city's operations and services for the benefit of all Espoo residents. The preparation of the action plan has been a major effort involving more than 170 City of Espoo experts. This collaboration should be continued after the completion of the programme so that the newly established networks, connections and practices are not wasted.



## **Espoo is a resident- and customer-oriented city**

A resident-oriented city is planned together with the end-users and stakeholders of its services. Espoo's best resources are its residents and communities that have been involved in the preparation of the action plan, and thus also in the development of the city's operations. Once implemented, the action plan will support and add to the cooperation and interaction between the city and Espoo-based associations in particular. Increasing this cooperation will support the entire Espoo community and ensure that the dialogue between various operators is maintained.

The exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the importance of not only health but also local nature, and many Espoo residents have learned to utilise the surrounding environment as a source of mobility and well-being. Among other things, the city's mission is to support the voluntary activities of Espoo residents and other work that promotes well-being, such as the conditions for sports, culture and youth work to promote the health and happiness of Espoo residents. In this work, well-being and local nature go hand in hand.



Olli Urpela

**Jukka Mäkelä**  
Mayor of Espoo

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## What is health?

Health is a combination of physical, mental, social, emotional and economic well-being. It appears both at individual and societal level, which have a mutual effect on each other. Societal well-being is a formulation of, for example, living conditions and employment. Health for an individual appears as satisfaction with life, happiness and social capital, which all contribute to the general quality of life. Health consists of contribution by both the people themselves, their intimate relationships, their immediate surroundings and the socio-political atmosphere.



## What is blue-green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure refers to a network of all vegetated areas in a city, despite of their planning status or land ownership. For example, private gardens, hard shoulders, street trees, public parks and urban forests are all part of the green infrastructure, no matter how set-in or natural they are. In cities, vegetated areas offer a lot of ecosystem services, and in an urban environment the greenspaces are also maintained in a way that supports these benefits to the people. Blue infrastructure completes the green network with water elements, such as natural and built water structures. As a city shaped by many streams and located at the seaside, the blue infrastructure has a pivotal ecological and recreational role in the landscape of Espoo.

## How greenspaces foster health?

There is a lot of scientific evidence that the provision of open and green spaces is associated with improved physical and mental health outcomes. Access to natural environment improves both mental and physical health, for example by reducing stress levels, enhancing cognitive functioning and increasing physical activity. In a built environment, vegetated areas cool the air, filtrate air pollutants and form a refuge from perceived noise. To the residents, recreational green spaces offer multiple possibilities for both relaxation, free-time activities and interaction with the others.

# 1

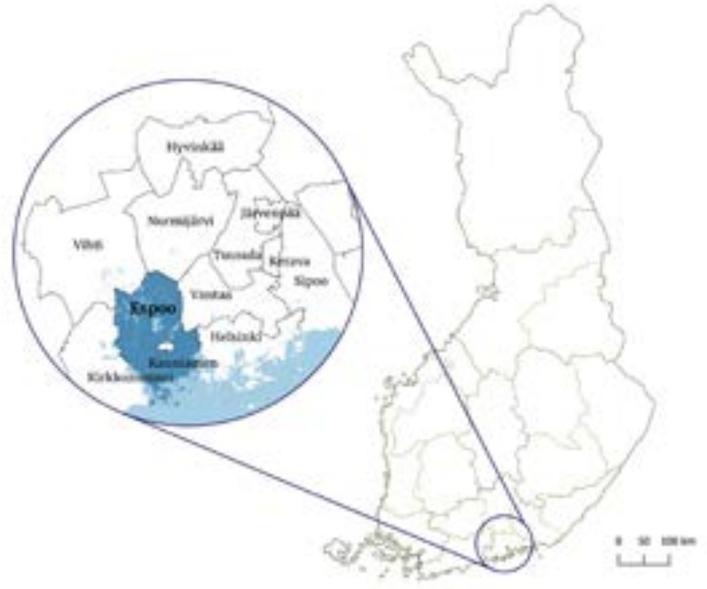
## Health from greenspaces – context and objectives



# 1.1. Espoo is a responsible network city in Finland

Espoo is the second largest city in Finland one and of its fastest growing cities. The city is located along the shore of the Gulf of Finland, bordering the capital Helsinki from the west. Espoo does not have a traditional city centre, instead it is a network city comprising five local city centres: Espoon keskus, Espoonlahti, Leppävaara, Matinkylä and Tapiola. Espoo’s special characteristics are its dense urban hubs, suburban housing areas around the centres and an extensive green area network. Nuuskio National Park is situated in the north-western part of Espoo and serves hikers from all over the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Water elements such as the sea, lakes and streams also play a pivotal role in Espoo’s recreational and green network.

Espoo is an innovation hub of Northern Europe and a centre of international company headquarters and high-tech business. At the heart of technology, art and economy stands the Aalto University campus in Otaniemi. Espoo has the highest proportion of residents in Finland with a university degree. The employment rate also is relatively high. Population growth is extraordinarily high due to both constantly high birth surplus and immigration.



Espoo is located in close proximity to Helsinki in the Metropolitan Region of Southern Finland. Nearly 300,000 inhabitants make it the second largest city in Finland.

## KEY FACTS FROM ESPOO

### Country

Finland

### Region

Province of Uusimaa

### Population

close to 300,000 inhabitants (2021)

### Foreign-language speakers

19% (2021)

### Life expectancy at birth

78.9 years for men, 84.3 for women (2018)

### Households with children

46% of all households

### Area

528 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 312 km<sup>2</sup> (approx. 59 %) is land

### Population density

938 persons/km<sup>2</sup> (land) (2021)

### Urban greenspace per capita

567 m<sup>2</sup>/resident

### Recreational routes and sports trails

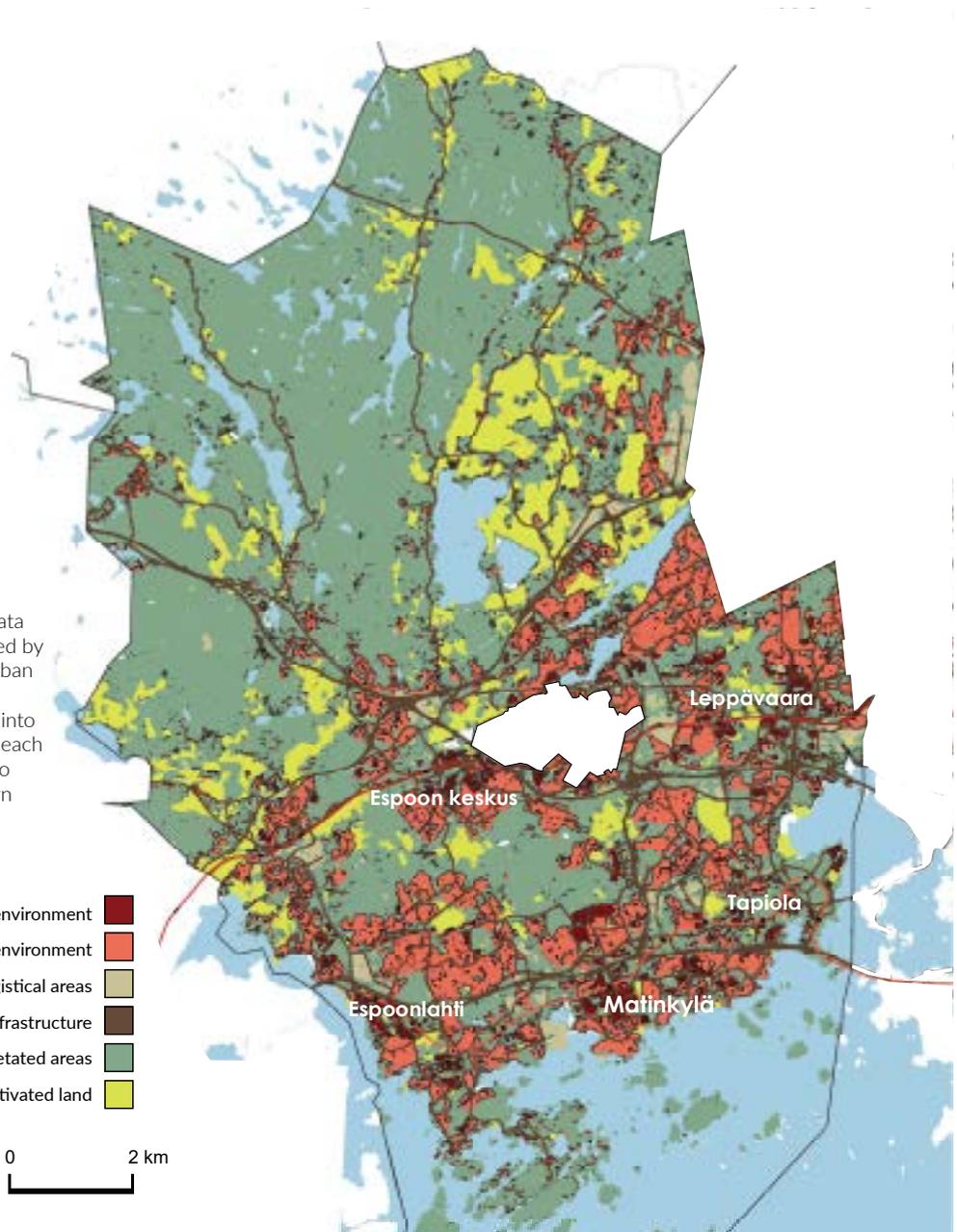
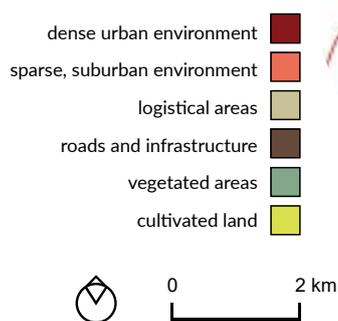
nearly 200 km

## 1.2. Healthy and green: strengths and challenges of Espoo

The population of Espoo is growing rapidly, and the urban structure is growing denser, especially in the urban city centres. To maintain this transition, the urban structure and its greenspaces need to be able to offer health benefits to both the current and future residents of the city. To secure sustainable urban transition, the City of Espoo aims to put together information and good practices to maintain the quality and quantity of greenspaces in the growing city. In Espoo, environmental protection goes hand in hand with the recreational use of greenspaces.

Some of Espoo's strengths are its educated and relatively healthy residents and an extensive green area network. In Espoo, the residential areas are mainly perceived as comfortable and safe. Risks to well-being are caused by urbanisation, rapid population growth, loneliness and social exclusion. In general, the residents of Espoo are more satisfied with their communal services than residents in other municipalities.

Urban fabric in Espoo with land use data of a 400 m<sup>2</sup> grid. Espoo is characterised by its five urban nuclei, all with denser urban centres and suburban housing around them. Multiple highways split the city into sections. The nuclei are connected to each other and Helsinki by train and a metro line, which will continue to the western parts of Espoo in 2023.



## Key perspectives on the current and future situation in Espoo

### Blue-green infrastructure

Espoo has exceptional amounts of natural wilderness, particularly in the city's western and northern parts. All around Espoo, urban greenspaces are more urban forests than formal parks and maintained by considering their ecological values. There are only a few intensively maintained parks, mainly in the urban city centres. The number of meadows and urban forests increases further away from the city centres. Water is an important element in a city with a 58-km-long Baltic Sea coastline, an archipelago of 165 islands, 95 lakes, the Espoo River and many streams.

### Recreational areas

Espoo's recreational network is built on Nuuskio National Park, Espoo Central Park and the Waterfront Walkway. Smaller recreational areas and routes are also located near each neighbourhood. More than 94% of Espoo's residents live within 300 meters or less of the nearest greenspace. In general, residents of Espoo are really satisfied with their sports and playing fields, recreational routes and other outdoor sports facilities in Espoo.

### Urbanisation and greenspaces

The population in Espoo is growing annually on average by over 4,500 residents, and is expected to exceed 300,000 inhabitants in 2022. Espoo is steering its growth into existing urban centres and locations that have good connections by public transport. Rapid population growth entails the development of new residential areas and the densification of existing neighbourhoods. Densification of the urban structure also causes pressure to develop the greenspaces — new construction and densification narrows and breaks the green network, which means that connections between ecologically important core areas weaken. By this, greenspaces may lose their capacity to produce high-quality ecosystem services to the residents. The growing population and decreasing number of greenspaces can lead to overuse of existing green areas, which can strip the terrain and increase the need for the maintenance of greenspaces.



Fallåker, Patrik Fagerström



Tapiola swimming hall, Marko Oikarinen

## Air quality and noise

Air quality in Espoo is good compared to the other European cities. Occasionally air pollution concentration exceeds reference values, especially along busy roads. Emissions also move along with air currents from all over the Europe. A high impact on the air quality is also caused by domestic firewood burning. Since the northern winter requires the gritting of streets, road sand weakens the air quality in spring, especially on streets. The busiest roads, such as the motorways and railways, are the main source of noise pollution in residential neighbourhoods. Compared to cities of the same size, the majority of the population has been located away from the noisiest areas.

## Climate change and extreme weather conditions

Due to climate change, extreme weather conditions, such as heat waves, heavy storms, or winter frosts are becoming more common and stronger. The residents of Espoo lack experience of protecting themselves from heat. Long heatwaves cause health risks, especially to the aged and to residents in weakened condition. In winter, rapid changes from mild temperatures to frost freezes water on the ground and causes a high risk to slipping over. Street maintenance is not always able to keep up with the salting and gritting work, which makes outdoor exercising both unpleasant and unsafe at certain times of year. Extreme temperatures also have an effect on the building structures and thereby on the health of the occupants. Vegetation can offer one solution for mitigating the impact of high temperatures on buildings.

Climate change also increases heavy storms in Espoo. Heavy rains are compounded by gales blowing the rain horizontally, which is uncomfortable but also causes water damage to buildings, which are not used to frequent rain striking from the sides. Due to frequent rains, the buildings do not dry out and humidity rises from the ground and moistens joints unsuited to such conditions. This may lead to mould and poor indoor air quality, which is a clear health risk to people. Outside, heavy rains cause challenges to stormwater management.

## Social well-being and segregation

Even if the number of people who feel lonely is lower than the average in Finland, social exclusion and stress can be considered as one of the main challenges for the health of Espoo's residents. Many people participate actively in voluntary work and NGO activities. An integral part of Espoo's work for social well-being is to prevent social segregation between neighbourhoods. In Espoo, this is carried out by supporting varied housing construction and balanced urban development. Also, the location and size of certain housing types is monitored.

### Health and well-being – working-age population

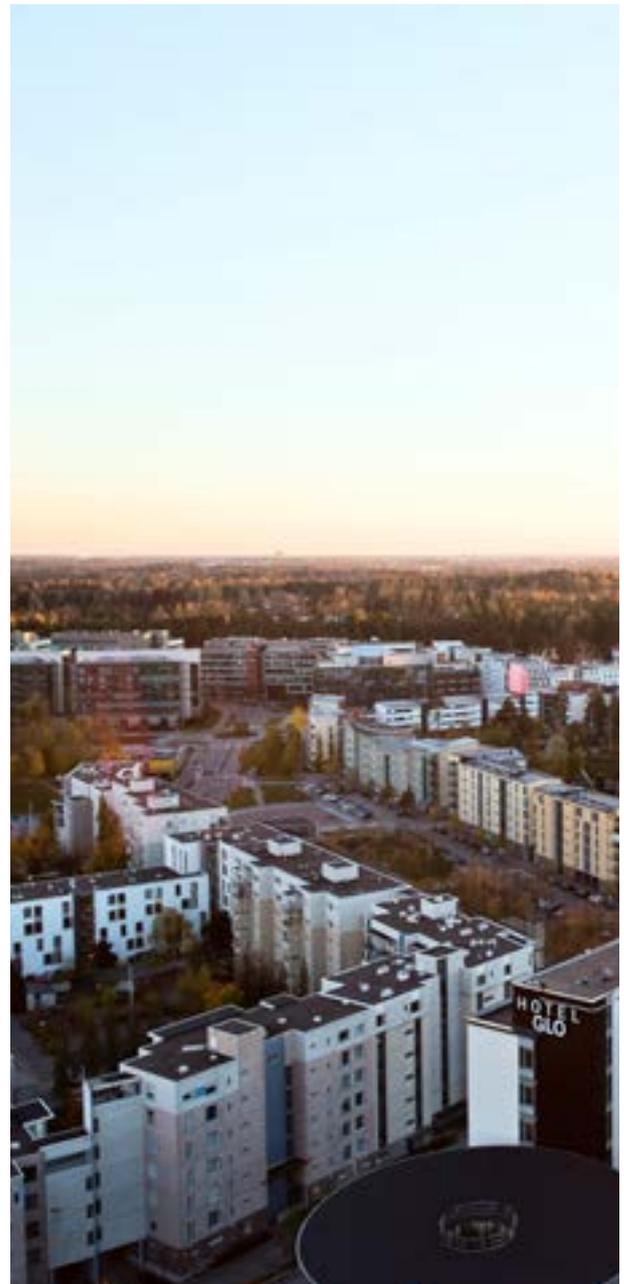
Espoo has healthier and more educated inhabitants, than the average population in Finland. For instance, morbidity and mortality rates are lower in Espoo than in Finland overall. Only 23% of the working-age population in Espoo consider their health as moderate or lower. Among Espoo's residents, the number of physically active residents is higher than the average in Finland.

### Health and well-being – the elderly

Most of the elderly live independently and actively and use only the basic public services. Therefore, only a small proportion need specific elderly care. 92% of the people over 75 years live at home. More than 1 out of 3 take an active part in communal activities, NGO activities or similar. Most of the elderly consider their well-being good or moderate, even if the percentage of people who feel lonely is relatively high.

### Health and well-being – school-age population

Most school-age children are satisfied with and perceive their health as good, even if a growing number of children are dissatisfied with their quality of life. Physical exercising is polarised into two extremes, where some are physically passive, and others do target-oriented sports, perhaps even too much. Many of the children also have challenges with eating, sleeping and using electronic devices, which can all cause obesity among the young population.



Leppävaara, Heidi-Hanna Karhu

Based on these strengths and challenges, the main aim of Espoo's Integrated Action Plan is to reconcile rapid urbanisation, green area planning and health-responsive services in a way that supports Espoo on its way to becoming a sustainable and healthy network city. The current state of the city organisation in Espoo is further described in Chapter 1.4.

## 1.3. Health-responsive blue-green infrastructure: the vision and main objectives

The long-term objective for Espoo's Integrated Action Plan for health-responsive blue-green infrastructure is to secure the residents a healthy living environment, in which they may promote their own mental and physical well-being and social interaction. Also, the Integrated Action Plan supports exchange of information and interaction on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure among the experts at the City of Espoo. The actions of the Integrated Action Plan are governed by individual departments and offer them a concrete tool for promoting the health benefits of green spaces.

Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) in Finland obliges the municipalities to offer the residents a healthy, safe and pleasant environment to live in. An objective of the Integrated Action Plan is to connect the health perspective more comprehensively to the planning and management processes of green spaces as well as to the public services the city provides. This enables the city and its residents to see how the urban environment and especially its green spaces can foster health and sustainable development in the city. Connecting different functions together is essential, especially in such rapidly growing cities as Espoo, in which the utilisation rate of green spaces is continuously increasing.

The Integrated Action Plan of Espoo consists mainly of actions, which help the city to further its residents' health and well-being by public services, green area planning and its maintenance. (see Chapter 2.1.). The actions illustrate the modus operandi of the city and demonstrate how the health perspective can be further integrated into these practices. This makes the Integrated Action Plan a useful tool for the city organisation, the residents, NGOs and other stakeholders in Espoo. The residents, for

example, benefit from the integration of health-related aspects into the urban planning processes, maintenance of green spaces and municipal services such as education, health care and sports. In addition to these actions, the Integrated Action Plan describes the current situation and responsibilities within Espoo's city organisation. By this, the Integrated Action Plan can be used as a tool for planning future cooperation and projects between different stakeholders.

Espoo's Integrated Action Plan is grounded on a distinct vision of future Espoo. The vision complies with the strategy of Espoo, Espoo Story 2021–2025. From the main objectives of the council term, the Integrated Action Plan contributes especially to the 5th objective of Espoo as a pleasant and safe place to live close to nature.

### Vision of a healthy and green Espoo

*Future Espoo is a green, healthy and safe network city, where the blue-green infrastructure supports mental and physical health and the social interaction of residents. Varied nature and recreational sites are of good quality, diverse and accessible for residents of all ages. The value of these sites for health and well-being has been recognised. As the city grows, recreational facilities and the well-being of nature will be developed through mutual support.*

In the future, the vision will act as a central guideline in the efforts for a better urban environment and well-being of the residents. During the process of compiling the IAP, the Urban Local Group I set four main objectives to achieve this vision. All the actions of the IAP respond to one or several of the main objectives.

## Main objectives of the Integrated Action Plan

### 1

#### NATURE IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Inhabitants of all ages and physical condition will be familiar with the nature sites and greenspaces of Espoo, become enthusiastic about outdoor activities and use the blue-green infrastructure actively and in a sustainable manner. Outdoor activities are supported by offering sports, exercise, healthcare and other services at the recreational areas of Espoo.

### 2

#### CITIZEN-DRIVEN CITY

Experiences, perceptions and proposals of the residents will be seen as a valuable resource. This will be utilised in the planning and management of recreational sites, outdoor exercise facilities, water activities and nature sites, as well as in the development of the services the city provides. In the future, residents of Espoo will better acknowledge their role in the upkeep of their everyday environment.

### 3

#### PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF BLUE-GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Urban planning processes will acknowledge and secure the sufficient quality and quantity of the blue-green infrastructure. Planning and maintenance of recreational outdoor sites will be carried out in a way that safeguards the health benefits of the blue-green environment and encourage people to use it.

### 4

#### INFORMATION-BASED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In Espoo, the city organisation and the residents will recognise how nature, water systems and recreational areas foster the health and well-being of the residents. The processes and fields of operation that influence the relationship between the environment and well-being will be recognised. In the development and decision-making processes of the city, information and internal expert networks will be utilised more effectively.

One of the main aims of Espoo's Integrated Action Plan is to create a comprehensive general view of the health benefits of greenspaces and information-based decision-making to support these benefits. In 2030,

- the City of Espoo will have a clear mindset of the best practices for improving the health of residents by developing greenspaces: the city will have taken the health benefit perspective as an important part of the decision-making processes and public discussion.
- The Integrated Action Plan has gained political acknowledgement from the decision-makers. Most of the actions will have already been implemented and new practices and networks will have taken root in the daily work of the city.
- The new cross-administrative network will have been established and operate actively. Members of the network actively will share up-to-date information, ideas and ongoing projects with each other.

As the future surveys will reveal, the residents will acknowledge and appreciate the extensive blue-green infrastructure of Espoo. The residents will also contribute to its conservation and management on their own behalf, and know how the City of Espoo promotes the well-being of its residents.

# 1.4. Promoting healthy blue-green infrastructure in Espoo: the local policy context

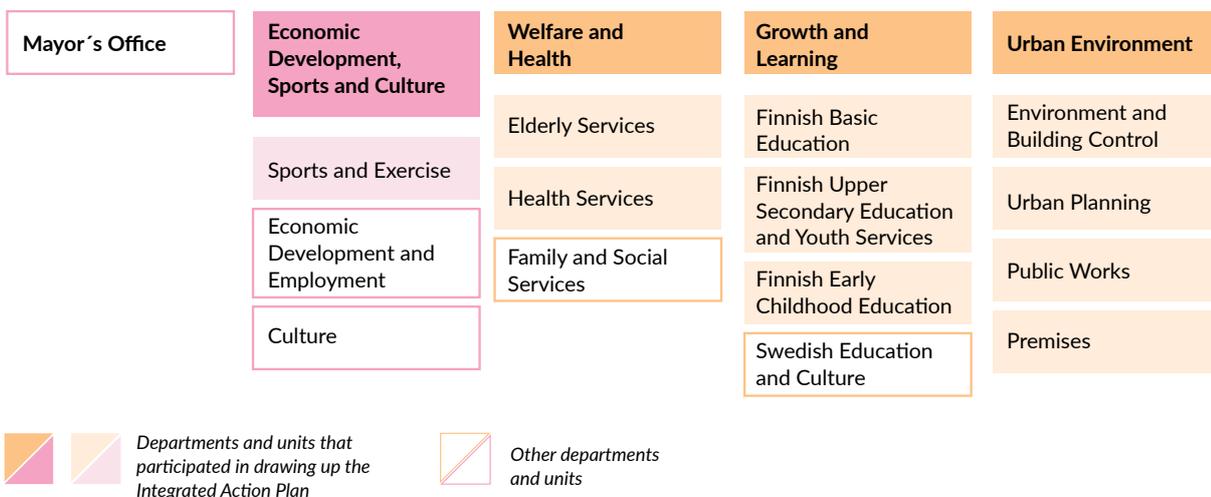
Since organisational reform in 2021, Espoo’s incumbent organisation consists of four fields of operation: Sector for Economic Development, Sports and Culture, the Welfare and Health Sector, the Growth and Learning Sector and the Urban Environment Sector. Fields of operation are further divided into departments, service sectors and units.

Consideration is given to the fact that the health of the residents forms an integral part for the work of many service sectors and departments. Also, the blue-green infrastructure and its ecosystem services are at the core of the work of many stakeholders. Therefore, the health perspective and urban nature are themes that the different departments collaborate in. This Integrated Action Plan aims to enhance and support this collaboration. Espoo’s Integrated Action Plan was conducted in close cooperation between different departments: the Urban Local Group I consisted of representatives of ten different departments from all main sectors. A more detailed description on Espoo’s Urban Local Groups can be found from the chapter 3.1.

During the Health&Greenspace project, some challenges were indicated related to Espoo’s city organisation and its operation. In a large city

and vast city organisation, it may sometimes be difficult to find out, for example, necessary units, experts or connections. Very few of the daily processes have a description of how it is done, which actors are involved and what phase one can have an influence on. Cooperation between different sectors could be more inviting if these responsibilities and description were more easily available to the public and other employers of the city.

Espoo has already worked hard to promote a healthy, safe and pleasant environment to live, study and work in. Since promoting health-responsive blue-green infrastructure requires close cooperation between different departments and units, this Integrated Action Plan introduces the responsibilities, which belong to the scope of each department or service sector in the work to secure the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure. The tables include information on the main duties of the actor, potential subunits with their duties and a description on how the actor contributes to the work for the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure. These clarify these responsibilities and enable even better cooperation between different units and experts.



The incumbent organisation of Espoo after an organisational reform in 2021. Of all departments and service sectors, ten had representatives in the Health&Greenspace project.

## Environment and Building Control Department

is responsible for nature and environmental protection and environmental health, among other things. The Department's personnel act as experts on issues related to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, water and nature protection, and as authorities in issuing building and environmental permits.

### Environmental Protection

#### Nature and Environmental Information

nature and water protection, production and management of nature and environmental information, climate change mitigation and adaptation

#### Environmental Supervision

environmental and soil extraction permits, environmental pollution, noise control, air quality control

#### Nature House Villa Elfvik

environmental education services, exhibitions, nature trips, events

#### Environmental Health

veterinary care, food control, health protection monitoring

#### Building Supervision

building permits and supervision, landscaping and felling permits

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Environment and Building Control Department

- collects and upholds information and geoinformational data on Espoo's environment and conditions of waterbodies.
- acts as an expert organisation in nature protection and therefore secures biodiversity in Espoo.
- acts as an expert organisation in climate change mitigation and adaptation
- is responsible for services related to environmental education such as nature trails, nature school and the training of educators. Nature House Villa Elfvik offers spaces for activities related to environmental education.
- is responsible for monitoring environmental health issues and prevents health risks caused by the environment.

## Urban Planning Department

is responsible for the city's master and town planning and transportation planning. The Urban Planning Department also orders and produces city-level and project-specific reports that serve city planning.

#### Master Planning

master-plan level urban planning, reports, development plans

#### Detailed Planning

town-plan level urban planning, reports, development plans

#### Transportation Planning

general transport planning, public transport planning, traffic studies

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Urban Planning Department

- plans and secures sufficient blue-green infrastructure in master planning and detailed planning.
- assesses the impacts of urban planning and promotes the health benefits of the environment by, for instance, considering pleasantness, safety, health, noise and air pollution in urban planning.
- promotes walkability and sustainable transportation in the city.
- produces and upholds GIS databases, surveys and reports on urban environment and its development.

## Public Works Department

*secures and organises the development and maintenance of Espoo's urban structure: the department is responsible for, among other things, the planning, construction and maintenance of public areas and land surveying.*

### Investments

*public area project planning, construction and management*

### Infrastructure

*public area management, street maintenance, green area maintenance, traffic management*

### Measurement and geotechnics

*geographic information material related to soil and bedrock, geotechnical expert services, real estate formation, field surveying*

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Public Works Department

- plans and builds the blue-green infrastructure such as parks, urban gardening plots, playgrounds, residential parks, recreational routes and sports areas.
- takes care on the maintenance of streets and public facilities such as forests owned by the city, plantings and street maintenance.
- coordinates and guides the working group for meadows.
- formulates and upholds Our Park agreements and organises community work events, which enable the residents to participate in maintaining the blue-green areas in the city.
- acts in close cooperation with the residents, answers to their questions and shares information on planning and maintaining public spaces.

## Premises Department

*is responsible for the ownership, maintenance, transfer, rental, construction and demolition of built city properties. Premises Department takes care of school, day-care centre and library properties, among others.*

### Planning services

*business premise project planning, maintaining and updating planning guidelines*

### Property development

*implementation of new construction projects and renovation works*

### Premises management

*acquisition and use of city buildings and premises, agreements related to leasing, hosting events*

### Service production

*maintenance, property management, cleaning, lobby and security services*

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Premises Department

- secures the blue-green infrastructure and health benefits of the urban environment by planning guidelines for public premises.
- is responsible for the planning, implementation and repair of outdoor spaces at public premises.

## Finnish Early Childhood Education

*is responsible for the provision of early childhood education and pre-primary education. The aim of Espoo's early childhood education and pre-primary education plan's environmental education is to strengthen children's relationship with nature, teach them to act responsibly towards the environment and guide them to an ecologically sustainable lifestyle.*

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Early Childhood Education

- promotes outdoor activities near the day-care centre among the groups and therefore builds the grounds for active and sustainable lifestyle in the future.
- by these activities, strengthens environmental consciousness and human-nature relationship among the children.
- uses Espoo's unique nature as a learning and playing environment.
- organises nature-oriented day-care group activities.

## Finnish Basic Education

*provides children and young people with basic education that is learner-centred, high-quality and regionally equal. The starting point for the activities is educational equality and the promotion of the health and well-being of children and young people. According to the Espoo curriculum, the areas surrounding the schools, nature and local operators and companies are also used as learning environments.*

**Education Development**  
*municipality-specific curriculum, competence development*

**Administrative Services**  
*pupil admission, pupil administration, statistics*

**Support for Education**  
*after-school activities, school transport services, hospital education*

**Multicultural Education**  
*preparatory education, teaching of S2 language, teaching of minority religions*

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Basic Education

- formulates the local curriculum and defines its focus areas. In Espoo, some of the essential skills are active participation, influencing and promotion of sustainable future.
- encourages schools for outdoor learning, outdoor exercises and urban gardening at schools.
- uses Espoo's unique nature as a learning environment.
- develops and upholds the know-how of teachers.
- implements and develops cooperation related to KULPS tracks.

## Youth Services

*is responsible for organising leisure activities for young people in Espoo such as the maintenance of local youth centres and ensuring their versatile operations. Youth Services provide support and guidance to young people at various stages of their lives and encourage them to make an impact.*

Regional Youth Services

Supporting and Ohjaamotolo Services

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, Youth Services

- organises free time activities to youth and together with the youth at the youth centres, youth camps and in different kinds of events.
- encourages teenagers to influence their surroundings, its pleasantness and activities.
- familiarises the youth to the local nature, keeping in mind the extensive opportunities Espoo has to offer.
- discusses and challenges the youth to act for nature and its upkeep. Youth services takes part in the initiatives started by the youth.
- strengthens the know-how of the staff and offers tools and practices for environmental education in daily situations.

## Sports and Exercise

*is responsible for the city's sports activities by creating exercising opportunities for residents, supporting civic activities, promoting outdoor activities, hobbies, competitive and top sports, developing health-promoting sports and exercise, maintaining sports venues and organising sports activities, taking into account special groups in particular.*

### Conditions

*maintenance of indoor and outdoor sports facilities, continental and marine outdoor activities*

### Sports Services

*space reservations, club cooperation, organising guided sports and exercise*

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Sports and Exercise

- plans and implements recreational and sports activities at the blue-green infrastructure.
- organises guided sports sessions for residents, both in- and outdoors.
- acts as an expert organisation on questions related to sports and exercise. Also promotes physical activity in public services.
- is responsible for updating and implementing the Nature Exercise programme.
- offers the residents free-of-charge Physical Activity Counselling both in- and outdoors and in the customers' own neighbourhoods.
- annually organises several sports events such as Seniorit liikkeelle sports event to the elderly, "Week at the shore" (Rantaviikko) and Family cycling event (Perhepyöräily).

## Elderly Services

organises home care and other outpatient care services for senior citizens in Espoo, family care support services for the elderly, basic hospital activities and long-term care as a housing service. Nestori Guidance and Service Counselling for Senior Citizens is centrally responsible for counselling and guidance of the ageing population and for determining the service needs of the elderly.

<p><b>Home Care</b> home care, supported senior housing</p>	<p><b>Senior Counselling</b> counselling and guidance, family care support, service centre activities</p>
<p><b>Long-term Care</b> institutional care, 24-hour service housing</p>	<p><b>Espoo Hospital</b> medical services, medical care, home hospital activities</p>

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Elderly Services

- acts as an expert organisation in questions related to the ageing population.
- offers the elderly activities that uphold well-being, for example the 'Outdoor friends for the elderly' scheme together with the Sports and Exercise.
- formulates the health and well-being programme for the elderly. The programme considers nature as part of the well-being of the elderly.

## Health Services

is responsible for organising the city's primary health care: the operation of health centres, oral health care, outpatient rehabilitation and the implementation of mental health and substance abuse services. The focus is on the prevention of illnesses and early support

<p><b>Health Care Centres</b> outpatient care, maternity and child health clinics, school health care, emergency care</p>	<p><b>Community rehabilitation</b> medical rehabilitation, physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy</p>
<p><b>Oral Care</b> preventive oral health care and emergency care</p>	<p><b>Mental Health and Substance Abuse</b> mental health and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation, housing support services</p>

### In the work to safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure, the Health Services

- acts as an expert organisation on questions related to health, well-being and morbidity.
- upholds services on mental health and rehabilitation from substance abuse, among others.
- is involved in drawing up the health and well-being programme for the children and youth and working aged population. The programmes consider nature and environment as part of the well-being of residents of different ages.

## Blue-green infrastructure in the Espoo Story 2021–2025

Daily operations in Espoo are based on the city strategy, the Espoo Story, which was updated for the ongoing council term 2021–2025. The vision of the Espoo Story shows Espoo to be a network city of five urban nuclei: Espoo is a sustainable and humane pioneer city, in which all the residents feel comfortable to work, live and study. In Espoo, a resident has a substantial possibility to participate. Sectors and units derive their own strategies and goals from the Espoo Story, which guide the work towards the common objectives of the council term.

Development of the city to fulfil the objectives of the Espoo Story is implemented through cross-administrative development programmes. In the council term 2021–2025, the cross-administrative development programmes are:

- Dynamic Espoo
- Healthy Espoo
- Sustainable Espoo
- Event City Espoo

The council term has seven main objectives. By these objectives, Espoo works to achieve the vision of the Espoo Story. Each of the council term objectives have linkages to the work for promoting health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure:

### 1. Espoo is the lead city in learning and education

Emotional connection to nature starts to develop in early childhood. In this, the schools play an essential role. In Espoo, positive emotional experiences, joy and creativity furthers learning and inspires the children to develop their skills. Outdoor pedagogy is part of the modus operandi of education in Espoo. Everyday exercise, mobility and a sporty lifestyle are supported by the actions of the Integrated Action Plan.

### 2. Espoo produces services with the contribution of the whole community

In Espoo, services are produced not only by the city organisation, but the whole urban community. Companies, NGOs and other stakeholders are part of an innovative urban ecosystem and production of services. This is also one of the cornerstones of integrated and dynamic urban development.

### 3. Espoo is economically sustainable and competitive by taxation

A liveable city is also economically sustainable. The Integrated Action Plan supports optimisation and efficiency in use of the city organisation's resources.

### 4. Espoo is internationally attractive city for entrepreneurs and innovation

Focus on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure support Espoo's role as an interesting and attractive pioneer, which dares to experiment new practices. The best international examples of bold solutions are piloted in all sectors in Espoo.

### 5. Espoo is a pleasant and safe place to live close to nature

Local recreational areas are used as a source for well-being and exercising. In Espoo, nature is accessible by all the residents. Espoo is a pioneer in conciliating population growth, biodiversity conservation and recreational possibilities. Residents of Espoo value urban nature. The city focuses on improving conditions for public transportation, walkability and cycling.

### 6. Espoo will be carbon-neutral by 2030

Espoo is active in preventing climate change and mitigates to its impacts. Nature-based solutions and local nature are an integral part of this work.

## 7. Espoo is Finland's best in immigrant integration

In Espoo, urban development is socially sustainable, and immigrants are supported by promoting employment and integration. Espoo's services are provided in three languages. The Integrated Action Plan includes actions for supporting the integration of the immigrants by nature exercising, communications and share of information.

In 2022, recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and the national reform of social and healthcare services have been put under extra focus.

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## Connection of the Integrated Action Plan with other programmes and networks

Work at the City of Espoo is conducted in a highly cooperative manner and in a diverse range of networks, steering groups and development programmes. The main aim of these networks is to share experiences and information, and thereby to reduce overlapping and to plan for new cooperation. Some of the cross-departmental networks that have a direct link to the work for the health-responsive green-blue infrastructure are listed below.

### **Expert network and steering group for advancement of health and well-being among 1) children and youth, 2) people of working age, and 3) the elderly**

Three cross-departmental networks led by Welfare and Health Sector. At the council season 2021-2025, one of the key focus areas is to develop pleasant and safe living environments, which prompt to active lifestyle.

### **Expert network Toimekkaat and steering group Neuvokkaat for environmental education and sustainable development**

The network promotes for lifelong learning process on sustainable development. By environmentally conscious education, the information and practices of both individuals and the community continue to develop in accordance with sustainable lifestyles.

### **Healthy Espoo development programme**

Healthy Espoo aims to increase the well-being and satisfaction of life among the residents. Through the development programme, the advancement of health and well-being will continue in Espoo, even after the national reform of social and healthcare services.

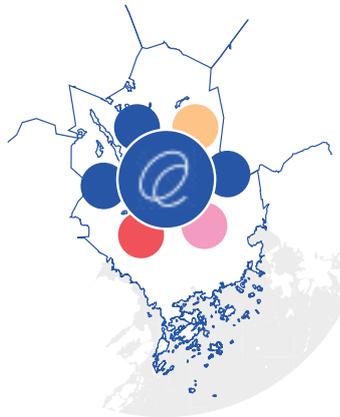
### **Sustainable Espoo development programme**

The Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development is responsible for the promotion and steering the city-level sustainable development and climate work. The Centre of Excellence supports sustainability-related work, partnerships and projects all around the city. It also coordinates and implements the Sustainable Espoo development programme, in which the main themes are low carbon mobility, clean energy, circular economy and sustainable lifestyles, land use and construction, and urban nature and biodiversity. Development work, experiments and cooperation related to the Sustainable Espoo programme are primarily carried out in projects enabled by external funding.

## 1.5. Influential cooperation: integrated urban development in Espoo

During the Health&Greenspace project, a systematic analysis was made on the connection of the health-responsive blue-green infrastructure to different levels of integrated urban development. In this analysis, the tools and practices of the URBACT programme were used as a starting point. Integrated urban development can be examined on four different levels: horizontal, territorial, vertical and resources integration.

In Espoo, the roots of integrated urban development and its principles of horizontal, territorial and vertical policy integration are deep. Horizontal integration of policies includes close cooperation across different policy areas and departments of the municipality. Vertical integration, on the other hand, gives a notion of cooperation between all levels of governance. Territorial integration calls for cooperation beyond administrative borders and with neighbouring municipalities.



### Horizontal integration cooperation across policy areas and local stakeholders

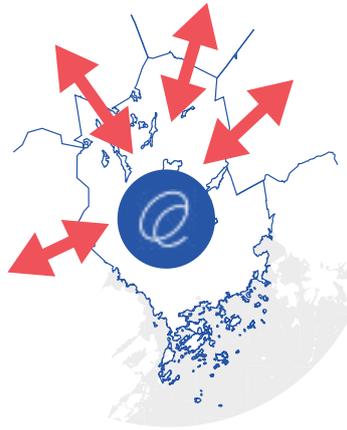
The integrated approach undertaken by the City of Espoo is based on good cooperation across different municipal departments. On an organisational level, the main aims of the Integrated Action Plan are to

- tighten cooperation between different sectors and departments
- share information and improve communications between departments
- recognise, what different departments have already done, planned or are able to do to boost or safeguard the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure
- find sections from departments' own policies, that have links to the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure

Solutions for these objectives are integrated to the actions of the Integrated Action Plan. For example, action 4.1. on building up a network for green well-being is set to continue exchange of information and ongoing projects within the city. Cross-sectoral cooperation has already been improved during the Health&Greenspace project.

Integration is about combining sectoral policies in a synergistic way. In Espoo, this is achieved by the strategic work of departments, which is based on the Espoo Story. As for the strategy of the city, it integrates social, environmental and economic approaches and forms the basis of the departments' own policies. Politicians of Espoo support the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan in different policy areas.

As a target group, the residents, residents' associations and NGOs are an integral part of the Integrated Action Plan. Several of the events organised during the Health&Greenspace project (see chapter 3.1.) were targeted at residents and associations. The events enabled them to take part in formulating the Integrated Action Plan. Therefore, improved cooperation with the local stakeholders already began during the process.



### **Territorial integration:**

cooperation between neighbouring municipalities and other Finnish cities

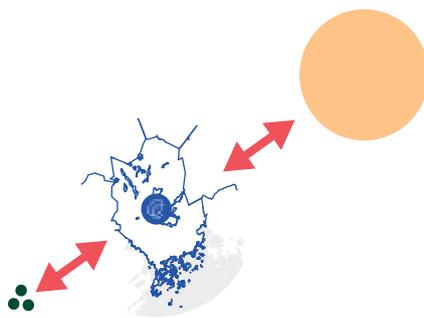
As the second largest city in Finland, Espoo has good connections and long-standing cooperation with its neighbouring municipalities. Municipal officials share information and good practices, for instance on the blue-green infrastructure, air quality and noise pollution. These networks and working groups have been established for incumbents in the municipalities of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, but also with other Finnish cities and on a national level. The Kuutoskaupungit network consists of six cities with the highest population in Finland. These are, in order, Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Oulu and Turku in 2022. Kuutoskaupungit has, for instance, created a common strategy for sustainable urban development, called 6Aika.

The province of Uusimaa is home to over 30% of Finland's population. As part of Uusimaa, Espoo stands at the core of the urban development of the future. Land use on a regional level is moderated by MAL contracts, a strategic plan for

conciliating land use, housing construction and transportation between the municipalities.

Through this national reform, social and healthcare services will in future be generated regionally. After the reform has been put into practice in 2023, Espoo's health care services will be provided by the Western Uusimaa well-being services county. This means that, in future, promoting health and well-being will have to be done jointly by the city and the well-being services county.

The urban development of Espoo will continue to support a network-like structure in the future. Territorial approaches can, therefore, also be applied to Espoo itself, when integration and reconciliation is also required between its different areas, urban planners and other stakeholders. This contributes for instance to the work of fighting against segregation and other social challenges.



### **Vertical integration:** cooperation between all levels of government

Vertical perspective on integration is about aligning policies and interventions with all levels of government, including international, national, regional and local governance in all policy sectors. This integration becomes visible, for example in cases when the revision of national legislation supports processes on a local level.

In Espoo, sectors and departments have participated in multiple international projects over the years. Eurocities is one of the longest-lasting networks. Individual projects by the European Union allow Espoo to create connections to other cities across Europe. For example, in the Action Planning Network Health&Greenspace, the City of Espoo gathered information and good practices across Europe health-responsive solutions in the blue-green infrastructure. These lessons have been integrated into the actions of the Integrated Action Plan.

Espoo takes part in multiple national and international networks and projects. These include, for instance, working groups of the Uusimaa Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment, which promotes regional competitiveness, well-being and sustainable development. Espoo takes part in the preparation of national legislation by giving expert opinions on the draft laws, together with other cities. In some cases, funding can be applied for from the national authorities.

Espoo's local stakeholders such as NGOs and other interest groups have a possibility to participate in, for example, urban planning processes. Public participation is an integral and important part of every process that has an effect on the residents and their well-being.



### Resources integration: balance of hard and soft investments

Integration of different kinds of investments is about finding a balance between hard and soft investments. This means conciliation of large physical investments, like construction of bridges and roads, to investment in human resources in urban regeneration. In Espoo, this is conducted through horizontal cooperation between different policy areas.

In the Integrated Action Plan, physical investments in greenspaces are reinforced to support the social, physical and mental well-being of the residents. The Integrated Action Plan helps the city avoid silos by representing what responsibilities different departments have related to the theme (see chapter 1.4.). For example, the Our Park concept is a soft investment that helps the local community take care of physical investments in public greenspaces.

# 2

## Health-responsive blue-green infrastructure in Espoo – the actions

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## 2.1. Introduction to the action plan

Espoo's Integrated Action Plan consists of four sections categorised by the main objectives introduced in the chapter 1.3. Each action is presented in an action table with responsible lead agencies, key partners, budget and timescale, among other things. The actions were conducted during the Health&Greenspace project based on internal problem definition, discussions, interviews and workshops. The actions were selected based

on evaluation, how they promote the objectives of Espoo Story and which actions utilise existing resources in the best possible way. Therefore, many of the actions complete or modify existing practices and services the City of Espoo already provides on its own or together with collaborating stakeholders. The framework for the delivery of the actions is further described in Chapter 3.2.

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### METHOD

The actions have been categorised based on six types of implementation. An action can be either focusing on certain aspects of **communications**, completing existing **services** of the city or facilitating cooperation in internal **networks**. Also, practices and a focus on **planning** on different scales will be modified. The category **survey**

includes actions on reformulating an existing study and the utilisation of existing data. In some cases, specific **training** is provided either to the city employees or other stakeholders in form of workshops or short introductions. Many of the actions also require several methods for full implementation.



## BUDGET

The budget for the actions is described in the action tables in five categories. The actions that need external funding have an icon, which describes the general scale of the required funding from small to medium and large. Potential funding schemes are described in the action tables. Some of the actions do not need external funding but can

be implemented within existing resources, in other words, the lead agency has agreed on covering the costs of the action from existing resources. The rest of the actions need no funding, apart from personnel expenses. During formulation of the Integrated Action Plan, each lead agency has defined their size and financing method for themselves.



**SMALL**

up to  
€9,000



**MEDIUM**

from €9,000 to  
€30,000



**LARGE**

from  
€30,000  
upwards



**FINANCED  
INTERNALLY**



**NO FUNDING  
NEEDED**

## HUMAN RESOURCES

Both the scope and personnel expenses from the implementation of the action are described through human resources. Human resources indicate how

many persons are needed to complete the planned action. Categorisation describes on a general level the scope of the action.



**ONE**



**SEVERAL**



**GROUP**

## TIMESCALE

Target year for implementing the whole Integrated Action Plan is 2030. In 2022–2030, the actions are executed in three different timescales from short actions to medium- and long-term actions. More detailed planning of all the actions will already

start at the end of the Health&Greenspace project in order to also complete the long-term actions in time. The results and potential for continuing the activity will be evaluated and assessed during the target year at the latest.



**SHORT-TERM**

actions will be implemented by  
the end of 2023



**MEDIUM TERM**

actions will be implemented by  
the end of 2025



**LONG TERM**

actions will be implemented by  
the end of 2030

## Objective 1

# NATURE IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Inhabitants of all ages and physical conditions will be familiar with the nature sites and greenspaces of Espoo, become enthusiastic about outdoor activities and use the blue-green infrastructure actively and in a sustainable manner. Outdoor activities are supported by offering sports, exercise, healthcare and other services in the recreational areas of Espoo.

### Actions to fulfil the objective

Name	Lead Agency
1.1. Multicultural inhabitants	Sports and Exercise
1.2. Physical Activity Counselling	Sports and Exercise
1.3. Organised nature and outdoor activities	Sports and Exercise
1.4. Neighbourhood sports areas and outdoor gyms	Sports and Exercise
1.5. Nature and outdoor events	Sports and Exercise
1.6. Urban walk routes	Environment and Building Control Department
1.7. KULPS cultural and sports education programme	Sports and Exercise
1.8. Outdoor education	Finnish Basic Education
1.9. Nature at health centres	Health Services
1.10. Greenspaces in health care practices	Environment and Building Control Department; Public Works Department

#### Risk

Communications on the nature sites does not reach the residents and other potential visitors. Reason may be in external communications.



#### Solution

Extra effort is given to external communications.

#### Risk

Nature sites and greenspaces in the city do not match the needs of residents' outdoor recreation. The actual needs of the residents have not been taken into account and heard when greenspaces are planned and implemented.



#### Solution

Implementation of public participation (objective 2) and investment in participatory activities and recognition of the needs, when vegetated recreational areas are planned.

## 1.1.



### Support for the exercising in nature of multicultural inhabitants and residents with special needs

*Increasing multiculturalism and residents with special needs will be better taken into account in the planning, supply and communications of sports and exercise services. Both information and services will be offered in three languages.*

#### Action

Multicultural families are encouraged to spend time outdoors by studying and dismantling barriers and prejudices against it. This will be concluded by communicational means and by providing information on easily accessible nature trails and recreational routes, guided tours, Finnish customs for outdoor sports, everyman's rights and health benefits on spending time in nature. Information on accessible recreational routes and sports facilities will be easily available and up-to-date in three languages. In addition to information for individuals, communications may also be targeted to NGOs dealing with multicultural inhabitants, which can support and organise activities outdoors. With existing resources, a workshop or training session can be organised to find new ways to support nature activities for these target groups.

In 2022–2023, current communications will be surveyed from a multicultural perspective, and a plan will be conducted to develop communications to better answer their needs. Also, possibilities for cooperation with NGOs dealing with multicultural inhabitants will be surveyed.

#### Lead Agency

Sports and Exercise

#### Key Partners

Environment and Building Control Department;  
Public Works Department

#### Result

Multicultural inhabitants are provided with high-quality and targeted information on recreational facilities in Espoo.

#### Main indicator

A plan for multiculturally sensitive communications will be made and implemented

#### Goal

By 2025, a plan for multiculturally sensitive communications will be made and implemented

#### Strategies and programmes

#### Context

The population of Espoo is rapidly becoming more multicultural and international – the number of foreigners doubled in 2010–2017 and continues to increase. Not all residents from foreign backgrounds are familiar with outdoor sports and activities, and feelings of fear or inconvenience may occur. However, outdoor activities and hiking are an integral part of Finnish culture, and hiking together with others may be a good way to familiarise oneself with Finnish society and its people. Considering residents with special needs, and inaccurate or inaccessible information on suitable routes and services may form barriers to using the services.



## 1.2.



### Organising Physical Activity Counselling in local recreational areas

*Physical Activity Counselling meetings are increasingly being organised outdoors and at customers' local recreational areas. Spending time outdoors will be promoted as part of healthy lifestyles.*

#### Action

Customer appointments of Physical Activity Counselling are increasingly being organised outdoors and at customers' local recreational areas, such as greenspaces, outdoor gyms and neighbourhood sports areas. Also, outdoors sports will be promoted as an easy way of doing sports and as part of a healthy lifestyles. At Physical Activity Counselling, a customer is given information on different ways of doing outdoor sports, local sports facilities and the health benefits of exercising outdoors.

In 2022–2023, general guidelines for promoting outdoor sports will be provided at Physical Activity Counselling appointments. Training or short introductions can also be given by physical education instructors who can give advice to customers, together with a list of links for recreational and sports facilities in Espoo.

**Lead Agency** Sports and Exercise

**Key Partners**

**Result** Customers of Physical Activity Counselling are better acquainted with Espoo's recreational and outdoor sports facilities and are more eager to spend time outdoors.

**Main indicator** Number of customer meetings taking place at greenspaces

**Goal** By 2025, exercising in nature will be recommended for every customer whose life situation it is suitable for.

**Strategies and programmes** Nature Exercise Programme

#### Context

Both mental and physical well-being can be promoted by interaction with nature and other people. Physical education instructors of the City of Espoo provide free-of-charge advice on sports and exercise to people of all ages, especially those just starting out. At the appointments, customers are given information on sports and exercise in their immediate area and supported in their endeavours to start exercising. By meeting customers in the local recreational areas, their self-contained activities in nature can also be supported.



### 1.3.



## Increase in organised nature and outdoor activities for the elderly

*The supply of services for organised exercising and regular sports groups will be supplemented with outdoor sports and exercising in nature.*

### Action

The number of organised outdoor events and regular sports groups for the elderly will be increased. Seasonal rhythm and outdoor exercising in nature sites will be taken into account, when services are planned. Organised events can be conducted as guided walk tours, collective exercise events at an outdoor gyms or guided lessons outdoors.

In 2022–2023, organised activities will be offered to the elderly all year round, and possibilities to modify outdoor sports gyms to better answer the needs of the elderly will be surveyed.

**Lead Agency** Sports and Exercise

**Key Partners** Elderly Services

**Result** Senior citizens will be provided with a varied set of different activities and possibilities to do sports together with others.

**Main indicator** Number of outdoor sports groups and their attendance rate

**Goal** By 2023, 15 groups in a week. By 2025, 20 groups in a week. By 2030, 30 groups in a week.

**Strategies and programmes** Nature Exercising Programme

### Context

The Sports and Exercise Unit already has a vast supply of organised groups for doing sports and outdoor exercising, even for the elderly. In the future, recreation in nature can be further highlighted to support physical ability and social interaction. With senior citizens, regular exercising maintains physical and mental abilities.



## 1.4.



### Communications on neighbourhood sports areas and outdoor gyms

*The use of neighbourhood sports facilities and outdoor gyms is increasingly being promoted to the residents by Physical Activity Counselling and in communications about sports and exercise.*

#### Action

Residents are increasingly being guided and encouraged to use neighbourhood sports areas and outdoor gyms on a daily basis. This is conducted both through Physical Activity Counselling and communications in social media, on the internet and the newspaper of the Sports and Exercise unit. Communications can take place in the form of text, images or, for example, guided how-to tutorials. In the communications, varied sports activities and means of using the gym equipment are introduced in order to support people of different ages and physical conditions to use the equipment. Organised sports groups and NGOs are also encouraged to use the facilities.

In 2022–2023, a communications plan on neighbourhood sports areas and outdoor gyms will be drawn and the first phases of the plan will be implemented.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Sports and Exercise
<b>Key Partners</b>	Public Works Department; Environment and Building Control Department

<b>Result</b>	Residents are provided with inspiring ideas and guidance on using the existing sports facilities.
<b>Main indicator</b>	A realised communications plan; increasing the number of people attending the facilities
<b>Goal</b>	By 2025, the number of regular users of outdoor gyms and other sports facilities will have been increased.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Neighbourhood Sports Programme

#### Context

Espoo has invested greatly in outdoor sports facilities, especially those in close proximity to the residents. Local sports areas include, among others, equipment for different sports games, sports fields for ball games, skate parks and multisports fields. Outdoor gym equipment has been set up all over Espoo, especially close to recreational routes. By conducting this action, the residents are introduced to these facilities and encouraged to use them on a regular basis.

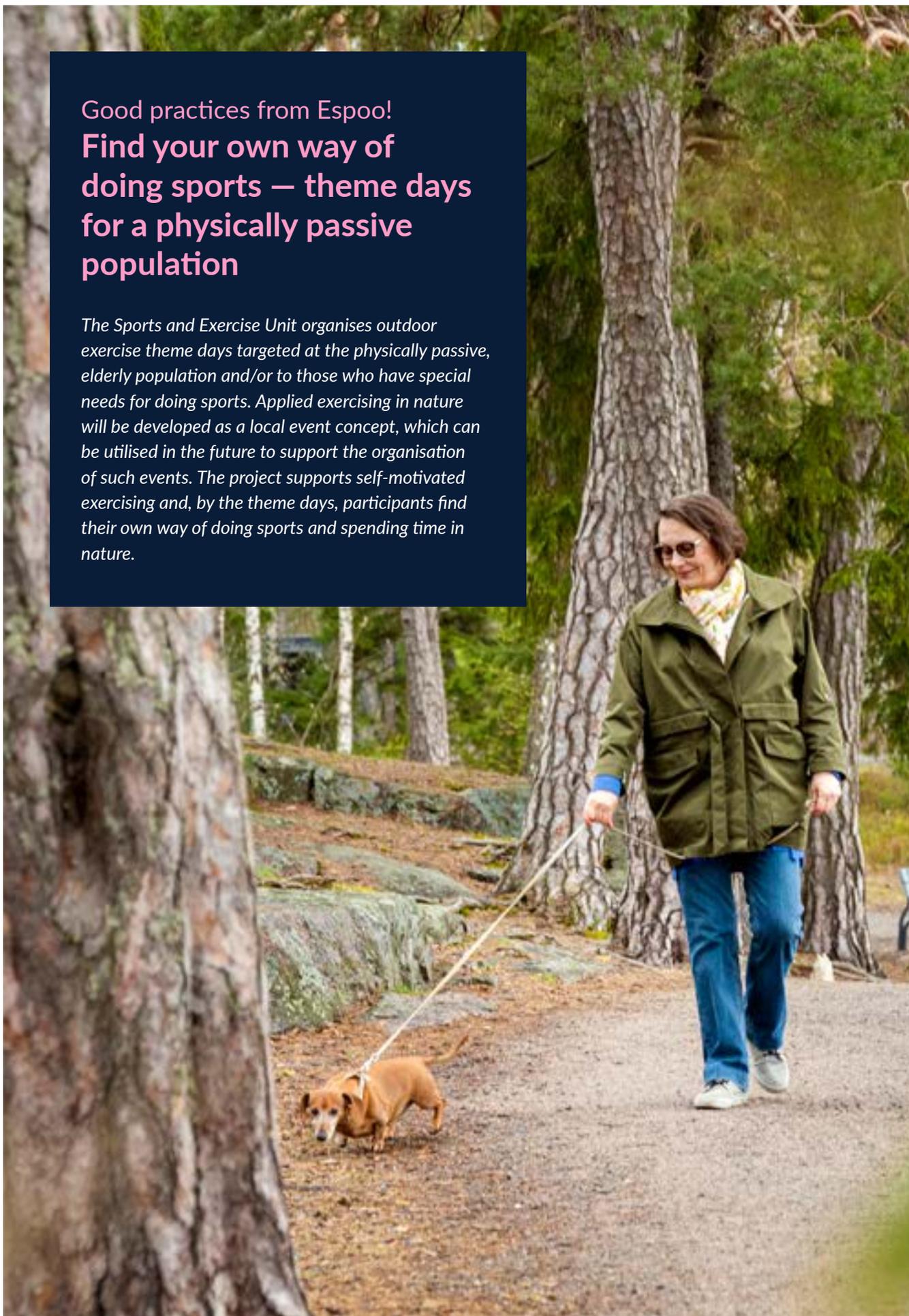


MEDIUM TERM



## Good practices from Espoo! Find your own way of doing sports – theme days for a physically passive population

*The Sports and Exercise Unit organises outdoor exercise theme days targeted at the physically passive, elderly population and/or to those who have special needs for doing sports. Applied exercising in nature will be developed as a local event concept, which can be utilised in the future to support the organisation of such events. The project supports self-motivated exercising and, by the theme days, participants find their own way of doing sports and spending time in nature.*



Matinkylä, Anna Valli/Ellun Kanat

## 1.5.



### An increase in organised nature and outdoor events for the public

*Sports and Exercise organises more outdoor exercise events and nature-related activities in public sports areas.*

#### Action

Sports and Exercise increases the number of organised outdoor events for the public. By being inspired by the ideas presented at the events, the residents are encouraged to find new ways of going outdoors and spending time in nature. Another aim is to increase the number of participants at the events within existing resources.

In 2022–2023 more nature-related activities and outdoor events will be organised than in 2021.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Sports and Exercise
<b>Key Partners</b>	Sports associations in Espoo; Finnish Nature Centre Haltia

<b>Result</b>	Residents who exercise too little find their own way of doing sports and spend time in nature.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Number of events and their attendance number
<b>Goal</b>	By 2023, 15% more outdoor groups and events than at the beginning of 2021.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Nature Exercising Programme

#### Context

Sports and Exercise annually organises multiple public sports festivals and events. These include, among others, *Seniorit liikkeelle* sports event to the elderly, “Week on the shore” (*Rantaviikko*), Family cycling event (*Perhepyöräily*) and “Outdoor exercise day at Oittaa” (*Ulkoliikuntapäivä Oittaalla*). The location and form of physical activity at the events vary, and they are organised both outside and indoors. At the events, the participants are introduced to new kinds of sports, encouraged to do exercise and enabled to do sports with like-minded people.



## 1.6.



### Implementation of virtual walk routes with a focus on local nature

*The City of Espoo encourages local residents' associations to create urban walk routes that introduce visitors to their local nature and to different nature sites in Espoo's districts.*

#### Action

Environmental Protection will, together with Culture unit, encourage residents' associations to create new virtual walking routes with nature-related themes and unique nature sites. This information can also be included in existing Urban walk routes or as part of other material the residents' associations or NGOs have produced on their local neighbourhoods. Also, possibilities to include such routes on the [Urban Espoo](#) website will be surveyed. These new routes could concentrate especially on recreational and nature sites and the special characteristics the neighbourhoods have in terms of nature. In planning these new virtual walk routes, Olari health nature trail Design Guide and the Kotinurkilta kalliaille book on special nature sites, natural monuments and nature reserves in Espoo can be utilised.

In 2022–2023, general interest in creating new virtual walk routes will be surveyed. As needed, Environmental Conservation will search for external funding to implement the action.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Environment and Building Control Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Culture  Espoo's residents' associations and other non-governmental organisations

<b>Result</b>	Residents are enabled to get acquainted with the health benefits of nature by introducing them to their local surroundings.
<b>Main indicator</b>	The residents of Espoo are more familiar with their local surroundings and value them more than earlier.
<b>Goal</b>	By 2025, new urban walk routes will have been established and actively promoted to the local residents.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	

#### Context

Various virtual urban walk routes encourage the residents of Espoo to get to know their local neighbourhood and exercise outdoors. These are, among others, [Peek into Espoo](#) routes for the children and [urban walk routes](#). Peek into Espoo routes are created by the libraries, Early Childhood Education and Event and Culture Services of Espoo. Urban walk routes have been created by residents' association together with the City of Espoo. They are virtual, mapped routes that introduce the visitor to a neighbourhood's history and the present, to its nature and culture, public art, architecture and with prominent people. The aim of the routes is to give the visitor a comprehensive and engaging image of their urban living environment, right where they are. On the urban walks, visitors cover a planned and guided route with a virtual map. The routes have no physical signs.



MEDIUM TERM



SEVERAL



## Nature and outdoor activities in Espoo’s KULPS cultural and sports education programme

*More nature and outdoor activities are planned and included in the selection of excursions in KULPS cultural and sports education programme for schools.*

### Action

More nature and outdoor activities are planned and included in the selection of excursions in KULPS cultural and sports education programme for schools. In addition to existing excursions to Nuuksio national park, possibilities for adding new nature activities to other recreational sites and greenspaces (Espoo Central Park, the archipelago) are taken into account. By KULPS excursions, students of preschool and basic education familiarise themselves with new inspiring ways of spending time in nature.

In 2022–2023, the potential of the current service providers to organise nature and outdoor activities will be surveyed and new service providers will be contacted.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Sports and Exercise
<b>Key Partners</b>	Finnish Basic Education; Culture service providers

<b>Result</b>	Children’s environmental consciousness is increased and they are familiarised with new means of spending time in nature.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Number of nature-related activities in the programme
<b>Goal</b>	In 2030, at least five different nature excursions in the range of services.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	KULPS cultural and sports education programme; Local curriculum of Espoo; Nature Exercise programme

### Context

KULPS cultural and sports excursions are part of Espoo’s culture and sports education programme, which offers free-of-charge excursions to all pupils as part of their curriculum. Each class conducts one excursion to a sports activity, culture event or library during a year. Each “track” has its own theme and materials. Sports and Exercise, and Culture produce the material for the tracks based on the local curriculum for different age groups. Exercising in nature can be supported in the KULPS programme, either as nature-related activities or excursions outdoors, all from an educational point of view.



A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a grey knit hat with a pom-pom, a pink jacket, and purple gloves, is looking down at a pine branch she is holding. The background is a snowy outdoor area with other people in winter clothing. The scene is bright and sunny.

## Good practices from Espoo! Nature-oriented day-care groups

*The City of Espoo runs multiple nature-oriented day-care groups in early childhood education, and the city is continuously aiming to establish new groups. As the Early Childhood Education Unit states, a nature-oriented day-care group is a group that operates mainly outdoors and explores nature on at least three days a week. There are also nature-oriented clubs in which all the activities take place in nature. Nature-oriented day-care groups follow the same curriculum as the other groups, only the operating environment has been expanded to nature.*

## Good practices from Espoo! Let's make the blueprint real – physical activity in early childhood education

*In 2019–2021, the Finnish Early Childhood Education Unit implemented a project, which targeted the realisation of objectives for physical mobility in the local curriculum for early childhood education. The actions and experiments of the project promoted rooting physical mobility in the daily activities of day-care centres. In Espoo, physical exercise and creative play are an integral method for children to explore the world and their surroundings.*

Taru Turpeinen

## 1.8.



### Strengthening of outdoor education practices

*Practices for outdoor learning and education will be maintained, supported and strengthened in all schools in Espoo.*

#### Action

Outdoor learning and varied teaching methods will be developed as one of the main targets of development in Espoo. This ensures that each teacher and educator will have, in the future, prerequisites, interest and ideas for bringing lessons outside in the teaching of different subjects. Outdoor learning will be integrated into the local curriculum and the way teaching is carried out in Espoo. Teachers responsible for the development of different subjects will be utilised in sharing information and ideas to conduct teaching outdoors. Courses and training organised by Nature House Villa Elfvik will ensure all teachers and educators are able to conduct outdoor education.

In 2022–2023, the teachers will be provided with training, peer support and ideas for conducting outdoor pedagogy in different subjects.

#### Lead Agency

Finnish Basic Education Unit

#### Key Partners

Environment and Building Control Department  
(Nature House Villa Elfvik)

#### Result

Varied teaching methods are supported and the surroundings of a school is utilised as a place for learning and inspiration.

#### Main indicator

Number of organised training sessions; amount of produced material; number of lessons organised outdoors

#### Goal

By 2025, all school classes in basic education will utilise outdoor education annually

#### Strategies and programmes

Local curriculum of Espoo

#### Context

In Espoo, outdoor pedagogy and diverse learning methods are already an integral part of teaching. This was also one of the focus areas in the development of teaching in 2021. During the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor teaching has already increased. In future, this progress will be further rooted in the teaching of all subjects and age groups.





## Visual nature elements in the waiting rooms of health centres

*Espoo will conduct a pilot on presenting nature experiences indoors. The experiment will study how visual nature elements influence customer satisfaction at health centres.*

### Action

Tapiola health centre will present visual nature elements such as videos on nature excursion sites, photos or paintings. The pilot experiment will test how these nature elements increase the pleasantness of the waiting rooms and how the visual nature experience affects customer satisfaction. The unique nature sites of Espoo will be simultaneously promoted and the customers encouraged to exercise outdoors.

Visual nature elements can be presented as already existing videos on televisions in the waiting rooms. Also, new paintings or photos can be added as part of renovation. Videos, maps or a link to an online map service can be provided to show where the nature sites are located. In addition to these, nature-themed exhibitions created by Nature House Villa Elfvik can also be set up in larger halls. Loanable exhibitions showcase, for example, the exquisite flowing waters of Espoo and tips on safeguarding biodiversity.

After the pilot experiment at Tapiola health centre, possibilities for extending the practices to other health centres will be studied. In addition, resources for the production of new videos or audio-visual material on other nature sites will be studied. In 2022–2023, the pilot experiment will be implemented at Tapiola health centre and its impact and possibilities for continuation will be studied.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Health Services
<b>Key Partners</b>	Environment and Building Control Department (Nature House Villa Elfvik)
<b>Result</b>	Customers of the health centre are provided with both the health impacts of greenspaces and information on the nature sites of Espoo.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Implementation of the pilot
<b>Goal</b>	By 2023, the pilot will have been implemented, and its impact and possibilities for continuation studied.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	

### Context

In addition to spending time in nature, virtual nature experiences have also been found to revitalise people and lower the pulse. Virtual nature elements have already been used in a couple of hospital districts around Finland. In 2021, Nature House Villa Elfvik produced videos on nature sites around Espoo lasting a couple of minutes each. These videos can also be shared to other centres and offices of the city. Sports and Exercise has also been interested in developing virtual nature services.





## Greenspaces in the health care practices of Espoo Hospital

*The City of Espoo will study possibilities of using greenspaces for the rehabilitation of hospital patients in cooperation with Espoo Hospital.*

### Action

Environmental Protection tightens cooperation with Espoo’s hospitals. The hospitals will be informed of the nature sites located in their proximity, and their usability in rehabilitation and health care practices will be observed. Based on the surveying, decisions on further actions related to increased usability, accessibility and health benefits can be made. The hospitals will be encouraged to participate in projects in which nature-based health care practices and green prescriptions will be piloted and used.

In 2022–2023, the need, objectives and aspirations for using greenspaces in rehabilitation will be surveyed. The potential of recreational areas and other greenspaces near the hospitals will also be charted.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Environment and Building Control Department; Public Works Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Urban Planning Department; Health Services  Espoo Hospital

<b>Result</b>	Patients of the hospital will be rehabilitated more quickly and will more likely seek greenspaces in the next phases of rehabilitation.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Cooperation will take place and an area will be designated for the use of the hospital.
<b>Goal</b>	By 2025, the need for and potential of greenspaces will have been surveyed. By 2030, the area will have been taken into use and information on its utilisation rate collected.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Healthy Espoo programme

### Context

In Finland, several hospitals have started to pilot nature experiences as part of rehabilitation. In Espoo, green prescription has not yet been piloted, even if a growing interest in it has been expressed.

Good practices elsewhere!  
**Kintterö health forest**

*Päijät-Häme Central Hospital in Lahti has its own health forest. Kintterö health forest has been used in experiments for the rehabilitation of hospital patients. Espoo’s Urban Local Group I visited the health forest and Lahti in spring 2022.*



## Objective 2

# CITIZEN-DRIVEN CITY

Experiences, perceptions and proposals of the residents will be seen as a valuable resource. This will be utilised in the planning and management of recreational sites, outdoor exercise facilities, water activities and nature sites, as well as in the development of the services the city provides. In the future, residents of Espoo will better acknowledge their role in the upkeep of their everyday environment.

### Actions to fulfil the objective

Name	Lead Agency
2.1. Health care and non-governmental organisations	Health Services
2.2. Outdoor friends to elderly	Sports and Exercise; Elderly Services
2.3. Urban gardening facilities	Premises Department
2.4. Our park concept	Public Works Department
2.5. Community work events	Public Works Department
2.6. Out and about concept	Environment and Building Control Department
2.7. Codesign in green area planning	Environment and Building Control Department; Public Works Department
2.8. My Espoo on a map survey	Urban Planning Department

#### Risk

Residents are not able to take part in the development of their everyday environment, since information on the plans and processes does not reach interested stakeholders at the right time.



#### Solution

In land use planning and service design, extra effort is given to public participation processes. This enables residents to take part in the projects when their contribution is needed.

#### Risk

Residents who actively take part in the public participatory processes do not equally represent different target groups, such as people of varying age, gender, minorities or abilities. Therefore, the comments from some of these groups may remain unheard. The right tools or channels to reach all the residents have not been put to use, or not all the residents have the same resources to participate in planning.



#### Solution

Different residential groups need to be recognised and acknowledged in communications. New tools should be piloted to reach new target groups in a way that best suits them.

## 2.1.



communications



service



training

### Cooperation between the Welfare and Health Sector and non-governmental organisations

*The City of Espoo and NGOs will develop practices, which help customers of mental health and substance abuse services to join the communal and rehabilitation activities of the NGOs.*

#### Action

The Welfare and Health sector of Espoo tightens cooperation with voluntary organisations, which work with sports, leisure activities and/or the health and well-being sector. Espoo will continue offering the non-governmental organisations theme-specific grants and spaces for assembly. Also, new ideas for activities in nature and with nature will be brainstormed and developed in cooperation with these organisations. These activities can include, for instance, urban gardening, nature exercise, a point collection scheme or guided tours in nature. The staff of the Welfare and Health Sector will be given training in the activities of the NGOs. With the help of these short presentations, a growing number of the staff in, for example, Health Services, will be able to guide their customers to participate in these activities and collaborative voluntary work. The personnel will also gain information about the impact of nature experiences on the health and well-being of people. The sharing of information will be ensured by seeing that this active cooperation with NGOs in Espoo will be introduced to the new personnel as well.

In 2022–2023, the key NGOs will be surveyed and workshops for developing new practices will be held.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Health Services
<b>Key Partners</b>	Espoo Association for Mental Health EMY; other social- and health-related non-governmental organisations in Espoo
<b>Result</b>	Customers of mental health and substance abuse services will be escorted to health-promoting and rehabilitation activities
<b>Main indicator</b>	Increased cooperation between the actors
<b>Goal</b>	By 2023, new procedures will have been developed and put into practice
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Healthy Espoo programme

#### Context

Espoo has many active NGOs, which have targeted their activities at mental and physical well-being. The city offers these organisations support in the form of financial aid to cover rental fees in their places of assembly and by offering them grants for specific projects. Sharing information on the connection of health and greenspaces with health care personnel and voluntary workers, nature activities are offered specifically to those the most in need. NGOs enable people to get peer support from others in the same situation in life. The organisations can also support well-being in the form of physical exercise and by a feeling of community.





## Good practices from Espoo! Urban gardening at Espoo Association for Mental Health

*The Espoo Association for Mental Health (EMY) and Social Services Unit of Espoo together keep an allotment in Kauklahti. Activities and community work are organised at the allotment during the growing season. Participants can take part in gardening either through a social rehabilitation contract, a more formal rehabilitation work contract or as volunteers. The activities of the association are facilitated by specialists in mental health and substance abuse. Many participants have enjoyed working at the allotment and got a regular day rhythm, better physical and mental condition, and a community to belong to.*

Kauklahti allotment, Espoo Association for Mental Health

## 2.2.



### Support from voluntary Outdoor friends of the elderly activities

*Voluntary workers of the scheme are provided with support and training. Efforts are made to increase the number of volunteers.*

#### Action

Training and support for volunteers of Outdoor friends of the elderly activities are increasingly being given, and the scheme is further developed in Espoo. Efforts are made to increase the number of outdoor friends, and the model is further communicated to new organisations and individuals. In the communications of the scheme, the benefits of outdoor recreation for the health and well-being of both parties – the seniors and their friends – is highlighted.

In 2022–2023, two training sets will be organised and ways to show acknowledgement developed.

#### Lead Agency

Sports and Exercise; Elderly Services

#### Key Partners

#### Result

Voluntary work is better acknowledged and the well-being of the parties increased.

#### Main indicator

The number of new volunteers and satisfaction and commitment of existing volunteers

#### Goal

By 2025, there will be over 100 volunteering Outdoor friends.

#### Strategies and programmes

#### Context

Sports and Exercise and Elderly Services together run a network of volunteers who have committed to help senior citizens spend time outdoors. The activities are based on voluntary work, but it is acknowledged as a crucial resource, especially in sheltered homes for the elderly. Helping elderly people to spend time in nature or run an errand not only supports mobility and the ability of the elderly, but also creates social interaction between different age groups.



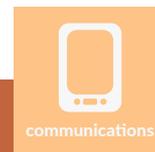


## Good practices from Espoo! Cross-country rolling walkers and wheelchairs

*Elderly Services of Espoo has invested in a set of cross-country rolling walkers and wheelchairs. With this special equipment, even senior citizens with weakened mobility have a possibility to go outdoors and enjoy nature, including on uneven terrain. The equipment was purchased as part of a campaign, which aims to reduce barriers for senior citizens and residents with special needs to go outdoors. The devices are tested in multiple elderly care and disability service units, and training for the personnel, relatives and volunteers is provided.*

Soukka, Esa Yletyinen

## 2.3.



communications



service

### Increase in urban gardening facilities in public premises

*Urban gardening will be supported in schools, day-care centres and other public premises by creating clear practices and operations for ordering urban gardening equipment for the premises.*

#### Action

Practices for ordering gardening boxes, berry bushes and other urban gardening equipment will be developed and expanded in such a way that an increasing number of schools, day-cares, youth centres and elderly services units can practise urban gardening. The Premises Department is responsible for organising urban gardening facilities on public premises. Practices for ordering the equipment are developed as part of the cross-administrative working group Toimekkaat, which coordinates the work for environmental and sustainable development education in Espoo. The expertise of Espoo City Garden can be utilised in collecting information and tips for, for instance, choosing vegetation suitable for urban gardening and its maintenance. New practices and instructions can be shared as a subsite on the intranet. The website with the instructions is promoted to related stakeholders who are encouraged to start gardening at the beginning of each growing season. Instructions are updated at the beginning of the growing season with new tips and guides.

In 2022–2023, practices for purchasing the equipment will be developed, and related stakeholders are informed of the new procedures. Working group Toimekkaat will support the use of the urban gardening facilities at the premises.

#### Lead Agency

Premises Department; Expert network Toimekkaat

#### Key Partners

Public Works Department; Finnish Basic Education; Finnish Early Childhood Education; Finnish Upper Secondary Education and Youth Services;

#### Result

An increasing number of children and other residents are able to interact with nature and learn skills related to sustainable food production.

#### Main indicator

The number of premises doing urban gardening

#### Goal

By 2023, commonly agreed practices will have been developed and put into practice. By 2030, urban gardening equipment can be found from almost every day-care centre and school.

#### Strategies and programmes

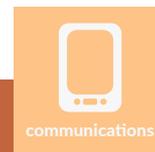
Local curriculum and local early childhood education curriculum of Espoo

#### Context

Many schools and day-care centres in Espoo have urban gardening boxes, which have frequently been offered to them at the beginning of each growing season. For a long time, only one person has been responsible for organising the system and practices. Through comprehensive guidelines and practices, this system can be made permanent and expanded also to cover new types of premises. Urban gardening in schools, for example, has been found to be successful and very much liked both in Espoo and on a national level, and it is hoped to continue.



## 2.4.



### Extension of the Our park concept to schools and day-care centres

*On the Our park concept, a version is modified for the use of schools and day-care centres. By the scheme, schools and day-care centres have a possibility to take care of their designated local neighbourhood forest.*

#### Action

A new version on the Our Park contract will be created, specifically directed at schools and day-care centres. The new model on the agreement is drawn based on the former contracts for designated forests for schools (finn. *Kummimetsä*). After the model agreement has been created, the schools and day-cares are informed of the Our Park concept, and are encouraged to draw up an agreement on the maintenance of their local neighbourhood forest. By the Our Park agreements, the schools have a feeling of ownership of their local forest, and are given information on the maintenance work in their forest. Also, the agreement tells other city officials which places have importance for the local residents. Our Park sites are uploaded to the internal map-based database, from which, for example, the Urban Planning Department can see and recognise these valuable sites.

In 2022–2023, the first model agreement will be drawn up and discussions with schools and day-care centres started.

#### Lead Agency

Public Works Department

#### Key Partners

Finnish Basic Education; Finnish Early Childhood Education; Finnish Upper Secondary Education and Youth Services; Swedish Education and Cultural Services

#### Result

Day-care centres and schools are provided with a common model, by which the children are taught to take care of their local environment.

#### Main indicator

Number of new Our Park contracts

#### Goal

By 2025, the new model contract will be taken into use and at least five schools or day-care centres will have agreed on maintenance of their Our Park forest or park.

#### Strategies and programmes

Our park concept

#### Context

A couple of schools in Espoo have agreed with Green Area Maintenance about their local forests as a designated forest for the school. Based on the agreement, the school has been given information about the maintenance work in the forest beforehand. Also, the agreement demonstrates to other units the importance of the forest to the daily work of the school and leisure time activities of the pupils. Some schools in Espoo feel that they have not been given enough information on the ongoing development in their neighbourhood. The Our Park concept has earlier been targeted at residents, non-governmental organisations and companies, which are given a possibility to take care of their designated public park or forest. At the site, the participants are able to pick up rubbish or remove invasive species, among other things. In the future, this concept will be developed to also cover the special needs of the schools and day-cares.





## Safeguarding the continuity of voluntary community work events

*The City of Espoo will encourage residents' associations and non-governmental organisations to organise their own community work parties. Communications will emphasise the health benefits of working for one's community.*

### Action

Residents, residents' associations and NGOs are encouraged to organise communal work parties independently by offering clear instructions on organising such events successfully. The City of Espoo can also promote the events in its own social media accounts and on the website. In the communications on the community events, the personal health benefits of such activities are highlighted. This standpoint is presented either in the form of text, images or videos. Simultaneously, the residents are given information on the importance of such public works to the local environment and its pleasantness.

The Public Works Department will organise open community events depending on the available resources. With communicational support from other departments, the number of participants in the events is aimed to increase.

In 2022–2023, material for communications will be produced and a communications campaign for organising communal work parties will be conducted.

**Lead Agency** Public Works Department

**Key Partners** Environment and Building Control Department

**Result** Espoo's NGOs and associations get excited about organising communal work parties and taking responsibility for maintaining their local environment.

**Main indicator** Number of communal work parties

**Goal** By 2023, at least 10 events will be organised with an NGO or an association as the key organiser.

**Strategies and programmes** Our park concept

### Context

A growing demand for community work events does occur, but the existing resources limit possibilities to organise them. In Espoo, anyone can already organise public community work events, and the city helps by collecting, for example, sacks of plant-based waste of invasive species. In the future, these activities will be safeguarded by promoting independence in organising them. Residents can also be encouraged to make Our Park agreements on the sites they feel commitment to.

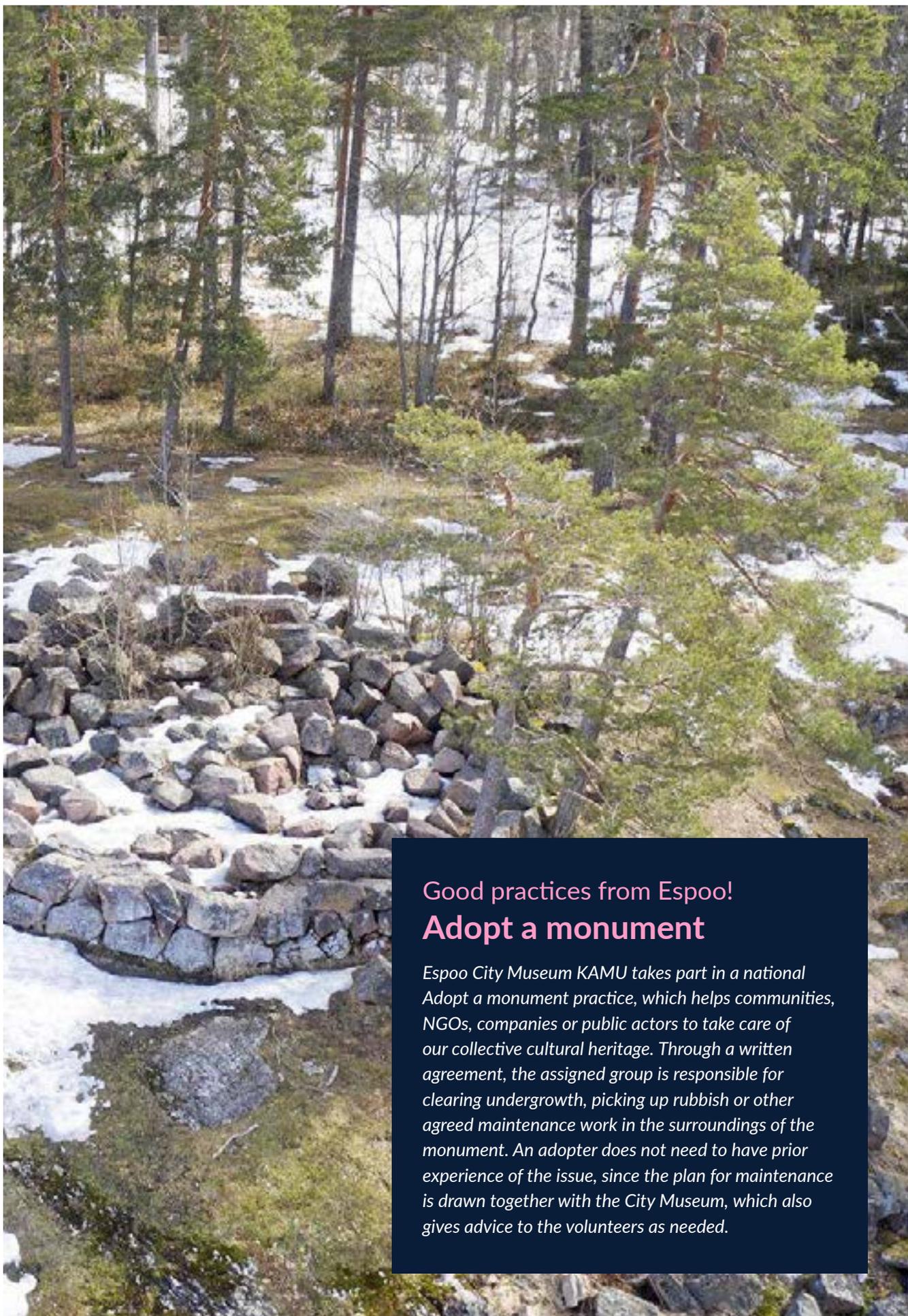
In Finland, working together in community work events has long traditions. Doing things together has scientifically been evidenced to have positive effects on perceived health and the feeling of belonging. Writing these benefits into words helps people to know what kind of influence their contribution has on personal and communal level.

  
**NO FUNDING  
NEEDED**



**SHORT-TERM**

  
**ONE**

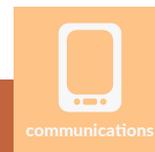


## Good practices from Espoo! **Adopt a monument**

*Espoo City Museum KAMU takes part in a national Adopt a monument practice, which helps communities, NGOs, companies or public actors to take care of our collective cultural heritage. Through a written agreement, the assigned group is responsible for clearing undergrowth, picking up rubbish or other agreed maintenance work in the surroundings of the monument. An adopter does not need to have prior experience of the issue, since the plan for maintenance is drawn together with the City Museum, which also gives advice to the volunteers as needed.*

Ruins of an observation tower at Dalsvik manor, Eetu Sorvali/Espoon kaupunginmuseo KAMU

## 2.6.



communications



service

### Deployment of the Out and about concept in Espoo

*Espoo will deploy and market the Out and about concept, which offers a creative way to get to know local nature, activities and the spaces it creates.*

#### Action

The Out and about concept for organising outdoor events will be deployed and mobilised in Espoo. The concept offers the residents a new way to familiarise themselves with their own local nature and the spaces it creates. The material produced in the Out and about project will be printed and organised into an easily loanable format. The availability of the material on Espoo's website will be promoted and the concept marketed to, for instance, the residents, residents' associations and residents' parks. The aim of the action is to offer the associations and stakeholders an easy way of organising a public Out and about event in their neighbourhood. The first Out and about event in Espoo was organised by Nature House Villa Elfvik in October 2021.

In 2022–2023, the material will be made available and actively communicated to relevant target groups.

#### Lead Agency

Environment and Building Control Department  
(Nature House Villa Elfvik)

#### Key Partners

Growth and Learning Sector; Finnish Early Childhood Education;  
Sports and Exercise

#### Result

Espoo's associations and NGOs have ready-made material on organising an outdoor event in local nature.

#### Main indicator

Number of organised Out and about events

#### Goal

By 2023, at least three events will have been organised in Espoo.

#### Strategies and programmes

#### Context

The Out and about concept has been created by the three non-profit organisations of Allergy, Skin and Asthma Federation, Suomen Latu – The Outdoor Association of Finland and Folkhälsan Förbundet and in collaboration with SitraLab 2020 training programme. The aim of the project is to help people to realise the uniqueness and value of their everyday environment, as well as to shed light on the diverse possibilities for exercising and spending time outdoors. Spaces of the scheme include, among others, a living room for recreation, a gym for physical activities and an atelier for doing arts. The event scheme is mainly targeted for families with children. The material is available in Finnish, Swedish and English.

see also  
**1.5.**



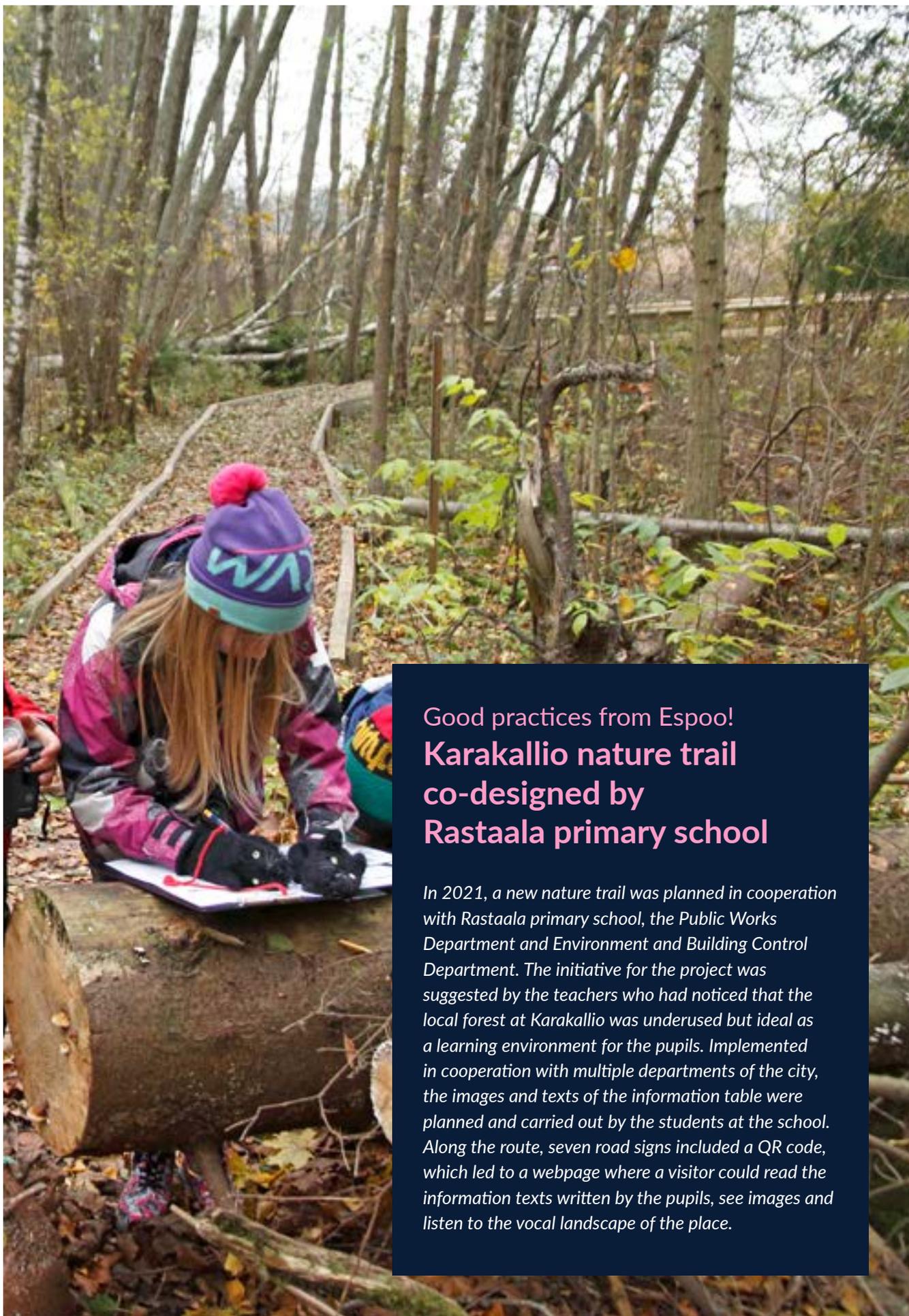
**NO FUNDING  
NEEDED**



**SHORT-TERM**



**ONE**



## Good practices from Espoo! **Karakallio nature trail** co-designed by **Rastaala primary school**

*In 2021, a new nature trail was planned in cooperation with Rastaala primary school, the Public Works Department and Environment and Building Control Department. The initiative for the project was suggested by the teachers who had noticed that the local forest at Karakallio was underused but ideal as a learning environment for the pupils. Implemented in cooperation with multiple departments of the city, the images and texts of the information table were planned and carried out by the students at the school. Along the route, seven road signs included a QR code, which led to a webpage where a visitor could read the information texts written by the pupils, see images and listen to the vocal landscape of the place.*

Laajalahti, Jussi Helimäki



## Good practices from Espoo! Olari health nature trail

*Espoo's first health nature trail was established in Espoo Central Park in 2018–2019. The initiative to plan a new kind of nature trail came from the local Olari-seura residents' association, which was also responsible for implementing the health nature trail. The trail was created in an interactive process where the residents, NGOs and schools participated in the planning, implementation and maintenance of the trail. A health nature trail allows a visitor to relax in nature and observe natural elements that have a positive effect on their health. In Olari, the trail is approximately 2.5 km long and there are eight checkpoints with three separate exercises each. The exercises on the information boards are given in three languages. Espoo's Small Scale Action in the Health&Greenspace project was to formulate a guide on the process for co-designing a health nature trail (see chapter 3.1.).*

Olari health nature trail, Janne Ketola/Summit Media

## 2.7.



### Support for citizen participation and activity in the planning and maintenance of nature sites

*Residents and residents' associations are informed of the possibility to cooperate with the city in planning and maintaining nature sites.*

#### Action

The residents of Espoo will be encouraged to participate in the development of their local neighbourhood and cooperate with the city. Communications of the city emphasises Espoo's interest in participatory processes, and already established good practices in this cooperation are presented. One such successful example is the Olari health nature trail, on which best practices have been collected in the Nature Trail Design Guide. The design guide encourages residents to take part in planning their local neighbourhood, work with the city and integrate a health perspective into similar projects in the future. Communications will be conducted in social media and the website of the city.

In 2022–2023, material on established participatory projects will be produced and published. Also, a plan for marketing the health nature trail concept inside the city and to other municipalities will be formulated.

#### Lead Agency

Environment and Building Control Department

#### Key Partners

Non-governmental organisations and residents' associations in Espoo

#### Result

Residents and their associations gain knowledge about co-operation with the city and get inspired to participate in the development of their local neighbourhood.

#### Main indicator

New participatory planning and maintenance projects in Espoo; number of health nature trail projects, which are inspired by the guide in Finland.

#### Goal

By 2023, there will be at least one new project in Espoo and one new planning process for a health nature trail.

#### Strategies and programmes

#### Context

Olari health nature trail is Espoo's first nature trail focusing on the health benefits of nature and one of the first projects where a nature trail was implemented together with the residents and associations. Based on the good experiences of the health nature trail planning process, the City of Espoo is interested in implementing similar projects in other places suitable for a nature trail.



## 2.8.



communications



training

### Invocation of responses from My Espoo on a map survey

*The results of a pioneering questionnaire will be shared and communicated to the employers, residents and key stakeholders of the city.*

#### Action

The responses of the unique and extensive My Espoo on a map survey will be communicated inside the city organisation, both in written form and as short presentations. Also, the data will be uploaded to the internal map-based database.

By implementing the action, employers from different departments and units can find this soft-GIS data from the database and know how to use it as information in their own work. The employers are also able to argue in the documents and reports how My Espoo in map data has affected, for instance, the preparation of plans or other practices and services of the city.

In 2022–2023, the data will be added to the map service and the results of the questionnaire will be actively shared.

**Lead Agency** Urban Planning Department

**Key Partners** Public Works Department

**Result** Perspectives and opinions of the residents will be put into the core of Espoo's operations.

**Main indicator** Number of employers using the data

**Goal** By 2023, every employer of the city will be familiar with the questionnaire.

**Strategies and programmes**

#### Context

In 2020, the City of Espoo conducted an extensive map-based questionnaire surveying residents' impression of their home city. The research was funded by NordForsk, Sustainable Urban Development and Smart Cities Programme, Project Smart Planning for Healthy and Green and Nordic Cities – NORDGREEN, under Grant Number: 95322. The survey asked for, for instance, places which are considered uncomfortable, special or used for free-time activities. The data showed how the residents consider closeness to nature in Espoo as an especially important feature of the city – multiple answers in a large dataset dealt with greenspaces for instance as special places or places used in free time. Analysis of the data is already ongoing, but information on the results or internal training has not yet been scheduled or coordinated.



**NO FUNDING  
NEEDED**



**SHORT-TERM**



**ONE**

## Objective 3

# PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF BLUE-GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Urban planning processes will acknowledge and secure sufficient quality and quantity of the blue-green infrastructure. The planning and maintenance of recreational outdoor sites will be carried out in a way that safeguards the health benefits of the blue-green environment and encourages people to use it.

### Actions to fulfil the objective

Name	Lead Agency
3.1. Accessible greenspaces	Public Works Department; Urban Planning Department
3.2. Planning guidelines in public outdoor premises	Premises Department
3.3. Green roofs	Premises Department
3.4. Planning principles in urban planning	Urban Planning Department
3.5. Health impacts in urban planning processes	Urban Planning Department
3.6. Environmental Health	Environment and Building Control Department
3.7. Survey of local forests next door to schools and day-cares	Urban Planning Department
3.8. Data on quiet and peaceful places	Urban Planning Department; Environment and Building Control Department

#### Risk

As the city grows, the sufficient quality and quantity of the blue-green infrastructure cannot be secured. The reason may be in unsuccessful planning processes (quality) and/or in other interests for land use (quantity).



#### Solution

Processes within the city are developed (objective 4), putting special effort into sharing information on the health benefits of greenspaces. Commitment of politicians and other key stakeholders.

### 3.1.



## Consideration of accessibility-related perspectives in the planning of recreational routes and greenspaces

*The accessibility, availability and usability of recreational routes and greenspaces will be further considered in detailed green area planning.*

### Action

In becoming renovation projects related to recreational routes and greenspaces, possibilities for improving their accessibility, availability and usability are considered. In green area planning, the needs of the elderly, residents with special needs and other people in need of accessible routes is therefore supported. This will be conducted by locating accessible greenspaces near senior care centres and in close proximity to residential neighbourhoods. Accessible greenspaces require, among other things, benches, shade from direct sunlight and handrails along the route. Detailed planning enables directive locations for these routes. Therefore, in addition to longer routes, the residents are offered short, natural routes close to their neighbourhoods.

In addition to improving the routes, special attention is given to communications and to the markings of the routes, so that everyone finds routes suitable for themselves both at the site, on the internet and from the online map service of the city.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Public Works Department; Urban Planning Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Sports and Exercise; Elderly Services; Environment and Building Control Department
<b>Result</b>	Daily physical exercise at greenspaces will be enabled for Espoo's residents of all physical conditions.
<b>Main indicator</b>	The quality and quantity of planning processes that consider accessibility
<b>Goal</b>	By 2023, multiple senior care centres will have an easily accessible and usable greenspace.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Green Area Programme

### Context

The population of Espoo is ageing fast, and as age accumulates, the needs for outdoor recreation and environment may also change. Nature activities for the elderly and people with special needs can be supported, for instance by adding rest areas along the route and by communicating clearly about suitable routes. The accessibility and usability of recreational routes requires not too many steep places, and easy access to the beginning of the route from surrounding streets and parking areas. For instance, sports parks act as natural starting points for such routes, since they often have the required infrastructure and also outdoor exercise facilities. Espoo has its own accessibility expert whose knowledge and expertise can be used when needed. There is no possibility to plan new fully accessible routes without external funding.



## Development of practices in planning of public outdoor premises

*In conjunction with the planning of public outdoor premises will be emphasised importance of greenspaces and vegetation as elements for pleasant and healthy living environment.*

### Action

In conjunction with planning of outdoor premises, by planning the guidelines of the city, the possibilities a plot of land offers for ecologically and functionally varying green environment will be considered. Natural materials such as soil, shrubs, meadow grasses and forest floor patches diversify the microbiota of children and improve their immune resistance. The ecosystem services of day-care centres and school playgrounds can also be improved by nature-based stormwater management and meadow vegetation.

Based on the planning guideline, which was updated in 2022, the preservation of trees and naturally aesthetic objects will be observed critically, and trees and bare cliffs will be spared whenever possible. By following the commonly agreed guidelines, the ecosystem around the playground can be spared and sensitive vegetation separated from places where it is susceptible to damage. By the action, Espoo's endeavours for a sustainable and pleasant urban environment are acknowledged and announced.

In 2022–2023, the general principles for increasing vegetation at day-care centres and schools will be drawn up. These principles will be utilised in the planning and implementation of new construction sites.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Premises Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Urban Planning Department

<b>Result</b>	The biodiversity and pleasantness of the environment will be included in Espoo's modus operandi on planning outdoor spaces in public premises.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Continuous development, use and follow-up of the planning guidelines
<b>Goal</b>	By 2030, the planning guidelines will have been followed and, in new construction projects, more vegetation, natural spaces and trees will have been spared. Each renewed or constructed day-care centre in Espoo will have a green and multifunctional playground, which supports the children's play and the healthy development of their skin's microbiota.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	

### Context

The City of Espoo regulates the construction of public premises by planning guidelines, which define principles for planning and construction of public premises in Espoo. By the planning principles, ambitions and values of the city are put into practice. The guidelines are updated on a regular basis based on societal changes and existing resources.





## Good practices from Espoo! Green playground of Vallipuisto day-care centre

*In 2019, the playground of Vallipuisto day-care centre was renovated based on a research intervention by the University of Helsinki. In the intervention, asphalt, gravel and sand were replaced with natural materials rich in microbiota biodiversity, including soil, shrubs, meadow grasses and patches of forest floor. The ADELE and KOTA studies showed that letting urban children play in microbiologically diverse dirt and vegetation alters skin and gut microbiota, which have a positive effect on children's health by decreasing the risk of immune-mediated diseases such as asthma and allergies. A diverse and natural playground also has a positive impact on children's creative play, physical activity, relationship with nature and perceived well-being. Through the positive experiences of the experiment, the City of Espoo is interested in continuing such practices in other public day-care centre renovation and building projects.*

Vallipuisto day-care centre, Anna Hakala



## Increase in green roofs on public premises

*Each new public premises construction project will investigate the possibility for planning and implementing a green roof.*

### Action

The Premises Department will analyse possibilities of adding a green roof to each new construction project. Green roofs are suitable especially in dense urban environments, where trees along a street may damage underground infrastructure or fallen leaves cause increased costs for the city.

Along with site-specific analysis of green roofs, the possibility for adding a green roof to a type-model sunshade will also be investigated. Light stonecrop species are especially suitable for light structures. In addition to a visual element, a green roof may also absorb water during light rainfall.

In 2022–2023, the general principles for building green roofs in Espoo will be drawn up. The construction of green roofs will also be investigated in each new construction project.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Premises Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	

<b>Result</b>	The quantity of vegetation will remain the same in places, where saving on-ground vegetation is not possible.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Number of green roofs; net quantity of vegetation in the urban environment
<b>Goal</b>	By 2030, each new construction project will investigate the need and possibilities for green roofs. New green roofs will be built at sites where it is expedient to do so.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Green Roof Vision

### Context

In Espoo, green roofs already exist at least at Ruusutorppa school and at the new Matinkylä swimming hall. New sites have also been planned. Extensive construction of green roofs is limited by both costs during the construction and the maintenance costs of roof structures. On the other hand, a green roof may protect the roof structures in a way which may lengthen its resistance to ageing. In some cases, it is more cost-efficient to prevent urban heat island effect by sparing existing vegetation in a city.



### 3.4.



## Principles for planning the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure in urban planning processes

*By composing general guidelines, the impacts of urban planning on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure will be made visible.*

### Action

The Urban Planning Department will draw up general guidelines and planning principles for securing and developing the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure on a master planning level. The planning principles will act as a checklist and tool for how urban planning processes consider the health benefits of the environment in, for instance, setting objectives for a certain town/master plan and impact assessment and follow-up for the plan. The aim of the action is to integrate the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure as an integral part of the modus operandi for urban planning processes in Espoo. The principles will be determined by the staff of the Urban Planning Department with the help of existing tools, surveys and research projects. The guidelines will be updated as needed.

In 2022–2023, the planning principles and guidelines for ensuring the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure on master planning level will be drawn up.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Urban Planning Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Environment and Building Control Department

<b>Result</b>	The impacts of urban planning on a healthy environment will be made visible.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Definition of objectives, indicators and results
<b>Goal</b>	By 2023, a working group will have been appointed and the current situation will have been determined.

**Strategies and programmes**

### Context

In Finland, the Land Use and Building Act defines requirements for planning safe, pleasant and healthy living environments. These principles act as guidelines for the development of the city. In a green and vital Espoo, the health and well-being of the residents can be taken as a central principle and target for development for already well-polished urban planning processes.





## Good practices from Espoo! Smarter ways to school

*Cycling and walking to school has been promoted in Espoo by participating in the national Smart way to school (finn. Fiksusti kouluun) programme. The programme offers information and good practices in planning and supporting cycling and walking to school instead of going by car. In Espoo, the project is being implemented by supporting the safety of the everyday environment and investing in cycling education at schools.*

Tuire Ruokosuo

## Consideration of the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure in objectives, impact assessment and follow-up for the zoning plans

*The health impacts of the environment will be acknowledged in different phases of master and detailed planning in a way that secures the objectives of a healthy, safe and pleasant living environment.*

### Action

In preparation for and for the follow-up of master and detailed plans, the health benefits and other ecosystem services provided by the blue-green infrastructure will be considered. The aim of the action is to integrate the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure into the modus operandi for urban planning processes in Espoo, for instance in the following phases of urban planning:

- **Assessment of background information** (finn. *lähtötietojen selvitys*) defines the principal objectives, surveys and preconditions for the zoning plan in question. In the future, this assessment may also include observation of how health benefits and green area accessibility should be ensured or developed in the planned area.
- During **preparation of the plan**, solutions for the quality, quantity and accessibility of recreational areas and greenspaces will be determined. All these are important characteristics for a health-responsible environment.
- The **town/master plan report** (finn. *kaavaselostus*) and especially the impact assessment of the plan can systematically include a section on the health impacts of the suggested planning solution, especially in cases where the plan has significant recreational areas and greenspaces.
- To support the **follow-up of the planning solutions**, indicators and tools that help to measure the health impacts of the implemented plans will be developed.

The expertise of different departments will be utilised in, for instance, collecting background information and as part of a participation and evaluation plan. In 2022–2023, the health perspective will be integrated into urban planning processes and the new practices will be piloted in several urban plans.

#### Lead Agency

Urban Planning Department

#### Key Partners

Environment and Building Control Department

#### Result

The healthiness and greenery of the everyday environment of the residents are improved by developing urban planning processes.

#### Main indicator

Implemented new practices and their integration into ongoing processes

#### Goal

By 2023, the health perspective will be considered in all integral phases of urban planning.

#### Strategies and programmes

see also  
3.4. & 3.6.

### Context

In Finland, the Land Use and Building Act defines requirements for planning safe, pleasant and healthy living environments. These principles act as a guideline to the development of the city. In a green and vital Espoo, the health and well-being of the residents can be taken as a central principle and a target for development of already polished urban planning processes.



**NO FUNDING  
NEEDED**



**LONG TERM**



**SEVERAL**

### 3.6.



## Consideration of the health impacts of the blue-green infrastructure in expert opinions of the Environmental Health Unit

*The Environmental Health Unit's advice on building and planning projects takes into account the role of green environments in preventing harm to health and in promoting health.*

### Action

In the expert opinions for construction and zoning plans made by the Environmental Health Unit, the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure will be further considered. This includes, for instance, the impact of street trees and greenspaces on noise and air pollution, stormwater management, heat stress, temperature regulation and wind conditions. This is concluded by elaborating and focusing internal instructions for giving the expert opinions.

In 2022–2023, the modus operandi of the Environmental Health Unit for preventing health risks by blue-green infrastructure will be defined. Internal instructions will be updated also to include impact of greenery for health.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Environment and Building Control Department (Environmental Health)
<b>Key Partners</b>	Environment and Building Control Department (other units); Urban Planning Department
<b>Result</b>	The healthiness of the environment will be ensured and potential health risks considered preventively.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Clarification of instructions and utilisation.
<b>Goal</b>	By 2023, the statement procedure will actively consider the blue-green infrastructure as part of expert opinions given by the Environmental Health Unit.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Supervision plans

### Context

Statements on suggested construction plans given by the Environment Health Unit deal with health impacts and the safety of outdoor premises. In zoning plans, the statements consider for instance noise and odour pollution and the quality of both swimming and drinking water, as well as all aspects of a safe and healthy living environment.



### 3.7.



## Renewal of survey on local forests next-door to schools and day-care centres

*Local forests used by day-care centres will be surveyed by a cross-administrative working group. Therefore, greenspaces important for education and growth will be taken into consideration in urban planning and nature management processes.*

### Action

Survey on Local forests next-door to schools and day-care centres (finn. *Tärkeät lähimetsät - Espoon koulu- ja päiväkotimetsät*) will be renewed, starting with financing and setting up a working group. The survey, this time targeted mainly at the day-care centres, will observe the location of local forests and natural environments used by the children and the routes the children use for arriving at the site. In a couple of case examples, the survey can also include significant characteristics of the forest perceived by the children. When designing and marketing the survey, its objectives and use will be specified and, when needed, the respondents will be guided to focus their responses on the most important local forests in the urban environments. After conducting the survey, its data will be uploaded to the internal map service and employees from all related departments will be guided to use it.

After the survey has been conducted and its use made permanent, a new survey can also be targeted at the schools, youth centres and, for instance, housing units for the elderly and disabled. In the renewed survey, new tools for a questionnaire can be used and the tool designed in a way that meets the needs for urban planning processes, nature maintenance and other processes in the city. The working group consists of employees from several units and departments, and the project is coordinated by the Urban Planning Department. Funding for the survey will be looked at in the Sustainable Espoo development programme. After the funding has been settled, a project worker will be employed.

In 2022–2023, funding will be applied for for the implementation of the action. After a grant has been agreed, work will start by setting up the working group for conducting the survey.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Urban Planning Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Finnish Early Childhood Education; Finnish Basic Education; Finnish Upper Secondary Education and Youth Services; Environment and Building Control Department; Public Works Department; Sustainable Espoo development programme  Aalto University
<b>Result</b>	Local forests used by day-care centres will be surveyed and employees of the city made aware of them in a way that secures their future.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Implementation of the survey
<b>Goal</b>	By 2025, the survey will have been conducted, material made available to the map service and the results of the survey actively used by the employees of the city.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Local forests next-door to schools and day-cares survey 2014; Sustainable Espoo; Local curriculum for early childhood education in Espoo

## Context

The earlier survey on Local forests next-door to schools and day-cares was conducted as part of a national Value to the school forests (finn. *Koulumetsät arvoonsa*) project, coordinated by the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (SLL). The survey was conducted in 2013 and published in 2014. 200 schools and day-cares answered the map-based questionnaire. So far, the Urban Planning Department has treated the data as indicative data source, not exact. By updating and renewing, the survey will ensure that the results can and will be utilised in the urban planning processes and green area maintenance in such a way that important forests will be secured. The mapping of school forests has also been the theme in one initiative of the City Council.

Daily exercise in nature by the children in day-cares is part of the early childhood education plan in Espoo. A lot of data on places used by the youth in their free time has already been collected extensively in My Espoo on a map survey.

Good practices elsewhere!

### Surveys on school and day-care centre forests

*Espoo's first survey on local forests was also one of the first such surveys in Finland. Comprehensive surveys on local forests have, nevertheless, also been conducted elsewhere. For example, a survey by Lahti on the local forests of day-care centres (Kortelainen, E. 2015) was conducted with the same methods used in Espoo. Both surveys utilised a guide written by the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (Sahi, V. & Finnish Association for Nature Conservation 2014). In Espoo, the survey was printed by funding provided by the Sustainable Espoo development programme and it was distributed to all early childhood education units in Local Nature theme year 2015.*





## Further analysis of data on quiet and peaceful places

*Already existing data on places that residents consider quiet and peaceful will be analysed and utilised in urban planning processes.*

### Action

The Urban Planning Department will conduct an analysis, which combines the existing data on peaceful places with noise modelling. Through such light analysis, Espoo collects information on places the residents consider quiet and good for recreation. In addition to the noise-level modelling, the data on perceived peacefulness can also be combined with the green infrastructure network and recent changes in transportation volume and land use. The analysis will utilise data from My Espoo in a map questionnaire and the survey on quiet places, conducted in 2016. In addition to noise from motorised traffic, railway transportation and air travel, heavy infrastructure can also be analysed as a source of noise pollution. Also, accessibility to these quiet places can be analysed.

The results of the analysis will be uploaded to the internal map database. Important datasets can also be included in the additional information on master and detailed plans, where it can be utilised more effectively in further development. In the future, the dataset will be utilised by the urban planners to add information on actual and perceived peacefulness in the city. The need for renewed questionnaire to the residents will be assessed in five years, when more changes in land use have occurred and the demand for updated data has been evidenced.

In 2022–2023, the work will be completed by a trainee or an employee of the Urban Planning Department.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Urban Planning Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Environment and Building Control Department
<b>Result</b>	Places perceived as quiet and peaceful can be secured.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Going through the material and implementation of the analyses
<b>Goal</b>	By 2023, the planned analyses will have been conducted.
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	



Good practices elsewhere!

### Limerick's Hush City perspective

*Limerick in Ireland has developed a free Hush City Smart phone app, which allows members of the public to record information on areas in their cities where they find peace and tranquillity. This information is then available to policy-makers and other app users. It can therefore perform the dual function of contributing to policy and showing other people where they can find peace and quiet in the city.*

## Context

Perceived noise has been found to have an effect on the perceived quality and healthiness of the environment, including attributes of pleasantness and peacefulness. Espoo has twice collected data on places the residents perceive as quiet: in a survey on quiet places in 2016 and in conjunction with My Espoo in a map survey in 2019. Of these, the first was conducted as a voluntary and additional part of noise modelling based on the Environmental Noise Directive by the European Union. The survey compared perceived quiet places with a limit of 45 dB. Whilst urban planning practices and noise modelling concentrate mainly on the noisy places and improving their environment conditions, the survey on quiet places highlighted the importance of quiet places. This also reveals the recreational and health-supporting potential of the environment. In the survey, a significant number of quiet places were in greenspaces. The next noise modelling will be completed in 2022.

### Good practices from Espoo! Green Paths app

*Digital Geography Lab by the University of Helsinki has launched a Green Paths mobile app, which helps people find pleasant walking and cycling routes. So far, the app has just been deployed in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Since environmental quality has been found to have a high impact on travel experience and physical mobility, the app suggests routes that have less air and noise pollution. Therefore, the app helps travellers to avoid harmful exposure to air pollution and to achieve a more satisfying travel experience. Digital Geography Lab supports open science and has made the codes public to ensure transparency and to give support for others to consider environmental cost factors in their apps.*

Digital Geography Lab/University of Helsinki



## Good practices from Espoo! Garden of Love

*In Suurpelto, you can find the Garden of Love – an ecological and communal alternative to a bridge of love with locks. Anyone can plant a fruit tree in the garden to symbolise love for another person, one’s own neighbourhood, a community, nature or something else. The garden gradually grows as the residents plant their trees. Every planter is responsible for watering and caring for their own tree. The city provides instructions on planting and caring for the trees.*

Suurpellon Rakkauden puutarha, Roope Permanto/Otavamedia

## Objective 4

# INFORMATION-BASED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In Espoo, the city organisation and residents will recognise how nature, water systems and recreational areas foster the health and well-being of the residents. Processes and fields of operation that influence the relationship of the environment and well-being will be recognised. In the development and decision-making processes of the city, information and internal expert networks will be utilised more effectively.

### Actions to fulfil the objective

Name	Lead Agency
4.1. Working group for green well-being	rotating responsibility
4.2. Material bank	Health and Well-being Sector; Environment and Building Control Department
4.3. Geoinformatical data	Urban Planning Department
4.4. Process descriptions	Public Works Department
4.5. Cooperation of Health Services and Sports and Exercise	Health Services; Sports and Exercise

#### Risk

Information on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure does not reach the right target groups, such as the residents or city officials. Therefore, no improvement in the current situation occurs. Reason may be in unsuccessful internal and external communications.



#### Solution

Extra effort is given to communications, so the information gained during the project is available to both residents and city officials. Political commitment ensures the relationship of the environment and health is recognised and an integral part of the city's activities.

#### Risk

The processes or responsibilities of different departments related to the planning and management of the blue-green infrastructure or well-being of the residents cannot be determined. The information gained during the project does not reach the right target groups, and the course of action related to better cooperation is not improved. The reason may be in a lack of resources or key stakeholders or in their prioritisation to other responsibilities.



#### Solution

Key stakeholders are invited to cooperate in the whole process of conducting the Integrated Action Plan. Extra effort is given to determining the main communications channels and right medium for sharing information inside the city organisation.

## Establishment of a working group for green well-being

*An expert network related to the health impacts of greenspaces will be set to continue cooperation, exchange of information and good practices within the city organisation.*

### Action

An expert working group for green well-being will be set. The network will continue cooperation, exchange of information and good practices within the city organisation, even after the Health&Greenspace project ends. The network shares information on ongoing projects, brainstoms new modes for cooperation and facilitates discussion between different departments. The network is also responsible for following the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan. The network is a preparatory group of specialists who deliver ideas and suggestions to be further developed and implemented by the directors. By implementing the action, City of Espoo will have a structural and designated network, which is responsible for sharing information on issues related to the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure. The network will be built on the Health&Greenspace project's Urban Local Group I, and more members will be invited as needed at the end of 2022. The network will be chaired by one or two departments or units at a time with a chairman and a secretariat for one year. The network will have meetings 2–4 times in a year, from which 1–2 can be used for presenting new projects and collaboration by external members.

In 2022–2023, the framework, objectives and course of actions for the network will be created. Operation of the network will be piloted at the first meetings.

### Lead Agency

Rotating responsibility, a network comprising all departments which participated in the Health&Greenspace project, and the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development

### Key Partners

### Result

The City of Espoo will have a structural and designated network, which is responsible for sharing information on issues related to the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure.

### Main indicator

Number of meetings of the network and feedback collected by the members

### Goal

By 2023, at least two meetings and a plan for continuing the network.

### Strategies and programmes

### Context

The members of Espoo's ULG I have considered the network very fruitful and a productive way of cooperating between different departments. It is hoped that the network will also continue after the project ends to ensure that the sharing of information continues and implementation of the Integrated Action Plan is followed. In addition to collaboration within the City of Espoo, the network may be developed in the future towards collaboration between the city and the Western Uusimaa well-being services county.

  
NO FUNDING  
NEEDED



SHORT-TERM

  
SEVERAL



## Good practices from Espoo! Master Planning Arena

*In Espoo, all master planners from the Urban Planning Department gather once a month to discuss ongoing plans and projects in the city. To maintain their know-how on relevant practices and research, the Master Planning Arena occasionally invites representatives from other departments, research institutes or other public authorities to present their work on the Arena.*

Heidi-Hanna Karhu

## 4.2.



### Material bank on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure

*The website of the City of Espoo will be complemented with an information page, which introduces information on the health benefits of greenspaces to different target groups.*

#### Action

A subsite will be produced for the city website, collecting and summarising information and research on the health benefits of the green environment. The site will be linked to, for instance, the pages of health care, environmental conservation and education. The site will be updated as required. After the website is ready, each department responsible for an age group will ensure that it is shared to the staff of their department and to the residents themselves. The sharing of information can be in form of, for instance, a newsletter, news, email list or intranet.

The target groups of this information are

- 1) children in early childhood education, their providers and staff at the day-care units
- 2) children in basic education, their providers and staff at the schools
- 3) youth and staff at youth centres
- 4) the working age population and staff of the city in other departments
- 5) the elderly population, their relatives and staff at the elderly care units

In addition to the material bank, the website will include lists in appendices 1 and 2, including Espoo's own surveys on health and blue-green infrastructure and additional reading from other sources. In conjunction with surveys conducted by Espoo, the responsible departments and people will also be linked.

Through the website residents, information on health-responsive green area planning and services will be added, also explaining why exercise in nature is good for health. The staff at the day-care units, for instance, will then have research-based information and arguments on why being outdoors and getting dirty is good for children's health and well-being.

In 2022-2023, the texts will be written, added to the website. and delivered to the responsible units for communication purposes.

#### Lead Agency

Health Services; Environment and Building Control Department; Finnish Basic Education; Finnish Early Childhood Education; Youth Services; Elderly Services

#### Key Partners

Sports and Exercise

#### Result

Through one-door communications, information on the health benefits of greenspaces will be made visible to the residents who will then be encouraged to utilise the health benefits on a daily basis.

#### Main indicator

The quantity and quality of the material and its utilisation rate in communication

#### Goal

By 2023, the material will have been successfully produced, published and communicated to different target groups.

#### Strategies and programmes

## Context

Research material on the health benefits of nature experiences is vast, but the information is scattered and has not yet reached all the target groups. Information collected and shared by a public authority will help to express this information to these target groups and therefore also argue for spending time outside. In Espoo, information on the health benefits was collected in conjunction with, for instance, the Ecosystem Service Analysis in 2018. Collecting the information on one page helps the residents to find and utilise it.



### 4.3.



## Improved availability of geoinformational data

*Essential surveys and their data on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure will be published in the public map service of the city.*

### Action

Key surveys and their data related to the health benefits of greenspaces will be uploaded to an internal service, where they will be available to all employees of the city. With already existing data in the map service, new mapping data, framing and other information will be available to ease the work of employees from other units and departments. In the future, the possibilities for uploading the data available for the residents will also be observed.

In 2022-2023, a working group, which will study the preconditions of the map service will be set up. Potential material will be added to the map service.

### Lead Agency

Urban Planning Department

### Key Partners

Public Works Department; Environment and Building Control Department

### Result

Within the city organisation, essential information will reach the right target groups and users, and the same work will not be done twice.

### Main indicator

Quantity of data in the map service.

### Goal

By 2025, it will be possible to find all essential material on surveys related to recreational routes, urban nature and greenspaces from the map service.

### Strategies and programmes

### Context

The internal map service currently has the basic information on, for instance, recreational areas and greenspaces. In addition to these, multiple surveys have also produced geoinformational data and more specific data on different scales both in detailed and master planning. This information is currently not available to the staff.



**NO FUNDING  
NEEDED**



**MEDIUM TERM**



**ONE**

## 4.4.



### Description of processes for the planning and maintenance of the blue-green infrastructure

*The main processes related to planning and maintenance of the blue-green infrastructure will be described in charts, which help the residents and employers to exert influence at the right time.*

#### Action

The Public Works Department will formulate a guide, describing the main practices for the planning and maintenance of the blue-green infrastructure. The guide will also show at what stage and how a resident or organisation can influence the process. These process descriptions of, for example, the planning and maintenance of a park, plantings and nature paths will be added to the website and intranet of the city. In addition to the process, responsibilities between different departments will also be presented. The guide by the Public Works Department can be complemented with process descriptions by the Urban Planning Department and Environment and Building Control Department as needed.

Through the process descriptions, both internal and external communications will be clarified and presented in a polished form. The residents and representatives of the city will have a better understanding of how they can influence the processes they are potentially interested in, such as planting trees, setting up benches or building nesting boxes. The residents gain information on and a better understanding of the planning and maintenance of public utilities, and the public bodies are better able to communicate and cooperate in these processes.

In 2022–2023, these process descriptions and the guide will be completed and published both in internal and external communications channels.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Public Works Department
<b>Key Partners</b>	Urban Planning Department; Environment and Building Control Department
<b>Result</b>	The operation of the city becomes more efficient, communications are improved and the residents are more able to have their say.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Completed process descriptions and guide
<b>Goal</b>	The material will be published by 2023
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	

#### Context

In a large organisation, not all employers have information about which department is responsible for certain activities and whom to contact in case of questions. Information on certain processes is scattered and, for example, questions and feedback are sometimes targeted at the wrong stakeholders. This slows down customer service processes and wastes resources. Through the description of processes related to the blue-green infrastructure, important information can easily be found whenever needed.



SHORT-TERM



## 4.5.

### Cooperation between Health Services and Sports and Exercise



service



training

*Customers of the health care services are guided towards sports and exercise services provided by the city. Physical activity supports the people's health and well-being and helps them to rehabilitate.*

#### Action

The Health Sector and Sports and Exercise will further cooperate with the units in order to improve the residents' health, well-being and physical activity. Cooperation takes place among customers of mental health and substance abuse services and of health centres, which are guided towards the sports services organised by the city. This cooperation will be supported by the following actions:

- The Sports and Exercise Unit will produce a demonstration video for the employers of the city, presenting the sports and exercise services the city provides. The video will be added to the **orientation material of new employers** of the city. The video will briefly demonstrate the sports and exercise services and show how and where further information on the services can be found. The video will also present nature exercise as an integral part of rehabilitation. The material bank for orientation will also be expanded to those health service sectors where it is not yet used. The newly published video can also be shared to already existing employers as a short introduction to the theme.
- Health services will draw up **general guidelines and practices** on how a patient is guided towards sports and exercise services. This streamlines the transition from one service sector to another and helps the customer to adjust to healthy lifestyle and free-time activities, which support rehabilitation. Simultaneously, cooperation and the sharing of information between the sending institution (health services) and the receiving partner (sports and exercise services) will be ensured. After the practices have taken root, their impact on the rehabilitation of the customers will be monitored.
- The Sports and Exercise Unit already successfully cooperates with physiotherapy through a model also suitable for other health services: special sports groups have a quota for customers of the physiotherapy section, fulfilled as needed. A possibility for receiving a **quota for mental health and substance abuse customers at the sports groups** can also be evaluated. Also, a need for adding other sports groups for these customers can also be evaluated.
- A possibility for adding **nature and outdoor appointments** to the programme of the mental health and substance abuse groups can be evaluated. The appointments can include, for instance, practical demonstrations by health associations and sports and exercise services. Cooperation between the Health Sector and non-governmental organisations is described in more in detail in action 2.1.

In addition to these actions, the management of the mental health and substance abuse section can decide on quick experiments for, for instance, organising customer appointments outdoors or adding green prescriptions to the medical treatment plan. After the experiment, their impact to the rehabilitation of the customers must be monitored.

In order to facilitate cooperation, the need for naming contact persons from each department and/or health centre can be monitored. The contact person would be responsible for developing cooperation and communications between the sectors.

In 2022-2023, a working group for developing and increasing these customer interfaces will be set up.

<b>Lead Agency</b>	Health Services; Sports and Exercise
<b>Key Partners</b>	

<b>Result</b>	The abilities of customers in mental health and substance abuse services will be improved, and the customers will be offered functional and influential help to support their own well-being.
<b>Main indicator</b>	Number of escorted customers in a year
<b>Goal</b>	By 2025, Western Uusimaa well-being services county and the City of Espoo will have a fully functional model for customer escort
<b>Strategies and programmes</b>	Nature Exercising Programme

### Context

Even small amounts of sports and exercise, especially in nature, help to support both physical and mental health. Spending time outdoors also promotes rehabilitation, for example from mental health problems. For example, with the support of the Outdoor Exercise Pass point collection diary, the health care staff can support independent exercising in nature. Walk buddies as part of the official medical treatment plan can also encourage physical activity. Staff from the Physical Exercise Counselling have visited the health centres to talk about the sports and exercise services of the city, but consistent practices for this cooperation have not been set.



## What if..?

During the process of compiling the Integrated Action plan, many ideas came up in the discussion. Not all the ideas, however, ended up as actions for different reasons, for example, lack of resources or responsible units. Some of the ideas are included here to give ideas for future possibilities.

### Nature-based solutions in green area planning

One of the proposed actions was to develop nature-based solutions in green area planning in the city, including, for instance, stormwater maintenance by water depressions or absorbing surfaces or vegetation that offers shade from the sun. To some extent, nature-based solutions are already used in Espoo, since the city aims to spare existing vegetation and trees, and materials are recycled whenever possible. New solutions are observed from time to time and utilised whenever possible and cost-efficient.

### Urban Tree programme

Through an Urban Tree programme, general practices on where and how trees and other vegetation are planted would be created. Such a directive would concretise the strategy of the city in many subcategories of sustainability. Also, it would lower the barriers for brave experiments and new practices to safeguard the healthiness of the urban environment. Such an Urban Tree Programme would include mainly street trees and trees in forest-like parks in an urban environment. The City of Espoo has already planned for an inventory of street trees and actions for their management, which means an official programme is not currently topical.

### Green prescription in health care

Everyday exercise in nature can further patients' rehabilitation and support their well-being. The theme is currently being widely studied and tested in different hospitals with promising results, even if general guidelines for using "green prescriptions" do not yet exist. In the future and after more studies, green prescription would be used to organise appointments outdoors, for example for customers of mental health and substance abuse services.

### Neighbourhood forums

To foster communications inside the city organisation and, at the grassroots level, ideas on a neighbourhood-level discussion forum for the employers of the city would be generated. On the forum, urban planners and other stakeholders would meet once in a year or as needed to discuss ongoing land use planning processes and development processes within a certain area. Such workshop-like events would generate the sharing of information and engage employers of the city in the development and planning of their own operational environment. Neighbourhood forums would include, for example, educators, day-care teachers, youth leaders, social workers or people working with the aged. Currently no department has resources to organise such meetings.

# 3

## Framework for delivery

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## 3.1. Process of composing the Integration Action Plan

The realisation of the Health&Greenspace project lasted two years between spring 2020 and spring 2022. During the project, information was transferred, activities organised and actions planned in all the partner cities. Cooperation and information transfer took place in the form of, for instance, thematic working group meetings, urban study visits and peer review sessions. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic turned many of meetings online. From both on-site and online meetings with other partner cities, Espoo learnt well-established practices, ideas and tools to better foster health-responsive planning and maintenance. Lessons from other partner cities are integrated into the actions.

The Integrated Action Plan is the main outcome of the Health&Greenspace project. In Espoo, the Integrated Action Plan was conducted in close cooperation with the internal expert network and in workshops, seminars and events. Activities and communications were targeted at both the experts of the city, residents and NGOs. The realisation of the Integrated Action Plan took place in four phases: by Activation, Action Planning, Planning implementation and Dissemination. Each phase ended with an integrally revised version of the Integrated Action Plan. The timeline includes the highlights of the process for building the IAP.

### Activation

May 2020 – April 2021

#### Workshop on the current situation and expectations

A workshop was organised for the ULG I in the beginning of the process. During the workshop, information on already existing activities and ideas on possible future actions were collected and discussed. The workshop contributed to defining the city context and initial challenges in Espoo.

#### Idea generation interviews

During the individual discussions with all key departments and units, information from the earlier workshop was deepened, responsibilities defined, and new action ideas generated. The definitions of interfaces with other units were seen as especially fruitful.

### **Webinars**

In two webinars, information on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure was shared and discussed with employees of the city, who formed the ULG II group. Presentations in the webinars dealt with the natural environment in rehabilitation and physical activity in greenspaces, among other things. There were approximately 90 employees of the city.

## **IAP Roadmap**

### **Action planning workshop I**

Based on 70 action ideas generated in the interviews, an extended ULG I network prioritised and continued to develop the actions into a more concrete and realisable form. The results of the action planning workshop were collected into action tables, which were then discussed and developed individually with the unit(s) responsible for its implementation. After the workshop, the vision and main objectives of the Integrated Action Plan were drawn up together with the UGL I network.

### **Park walk for senior citizens in Matinkylä**

As a ULG III event, a park walk was arranged in order to collect ideas and opinions on greenspaces from the senior citizens of Espoo. Altogether 24 elderly people, five city representatives and one researcher gathered to walk through the parks, streets and forests of Matinkylä neighbourhood. Comments and suggestions from the participants were collected in a memorandum, which was shared with the participating departments.

### **Visit to the green playground of Vallipuisto day-care centre**

At the visit to the Vallipuisto day-care centre, researchers from the University of Helsinki and staff of the day-care centre familiarised 10 employees of Espoo with the construction work and research at the day-care centre. New ideas were integrated into the actions of the Integrated Action Plan.

## **Action Planning**

May 2021 – December 2021

## Planning implementation January 2022 – May 2022

### Peer review of the Integrated Action Plan

Other partner cities of the Health&Greenspace project evaluated and commented on the Integrated Action Plan in an online workshop. The Peer Review gave new perspectives and suggestions to be included to the plan. The results and comments of the Peer Review were reported to the ULG I network and were integrated to the official draft version of the document.

### Draft IAP

### Action planning workshop II

Initial action descriptions were evaluated once more by an extended ULG I network in an online workshop. Also, more information on indicators, expected outcomes and the first phases of implementing the actions were discussed.

The workshop contributed significantly to formulation of the action tables and helped to assess the framework for delivery and resources of the actions.

### Local Study Visit to Lahti Green Capital

Eight representatives of the ULG I network visited Lahti Green Capital and its good practices in promoting sustainable development and health of the residents. During the day, the team explored Kintterö health forest in Lahti on an urban study visit and the successes and lessons of Lahti Green Capital year.

### Idea generation workshop for Espoo Association for Mental Health

The workshop collected ideas on how Espoo Association for Mental Health (EMY) utilises Espoo's greenspaces in its activities, and how employees of the association perceive and know the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure. Through the workshop, the City of Espoo has a better idea of how it can support associations in promoting health of the people. Also, two representatives of the city attended a nature excursion organised by the association, and saw how the association works in practice.

### Idea generation workshop for NGOs

The workshop was organised as a bidirectional exchange of information between NGOs and the city. In the workshop, the NGOs commented on actions related to them and their cooperation with the city. They also generated material on how they use Espoo's extensive green network in their activities.

Altogether 16 participants from nine different NGOs or communities participated. Through the workshop, NGO-related actions were revised and a memorandum on the comments and suggestions of the NGOs was shared with the relevant departments.

### Healthy Cities workshop

The APN Healthy Cities project presented the Urban Planning Department of Espoo's Health Generator tool, which helps to evaluate the health impacts of a certain land use plan or other development project. In the workshop, participants piloted the new tool in their own projects as well. Also, a recording of the demonstration was shared within the city organisation. Altogether seven employers from the Urban Planning Department took part.

## Final IAP

After publication of the IAP, the document will be shared to the committees in order to achieve **political commitment** to the document.

**Final dissemination** will present and celebrate the final outcomes of the project. Events will be organised for both the residents and employers of the city.

**Dissemination**  
June 2022 -

## Urban Local Groups in Espoo

During the Health&Greenspace project, Espoo ran three Urban Local Groups, which all had their own target group and task. This Integrated Action plan has been drawn and will be implemented through the joint contribution of all Urban Local Groups.

**ULG I, an internal expert network**, included representatives of 10 different departments and units from all main sectors of the City of Espoo. ULG I network had a permanent assembly with approximately 25 members. The network organised meetings monthly during the project. The ULG I network was mainly responsible for formulating the IAP and sharing the information and results of the project from and to their own departments and fields of expertise. The ULG I network had approximately 20 online meetings, three workshops and one local study visit.

**ULG II, an extended expert network**, was targeted at other employers of Espoo. In the ULG II events, researchers and external authorities shared up-to-date information on the health benefits

of the blue-green infrastructure. The main aim of the ULG II network meetings was to spread information on the topic of the project all over the city organisation and give food for thought on how health perspectives could be incorporated in the different practices of the city. During the project, two webinars, one on-site visit and one workshop were organised as ULG II meetings.

**ULG III, the residents, NGOs and other stakeholders** participated in the Health&Greenspace project through ULG III activities. In the events, information was transferred both to and from the residents and communities on the health benefits of the blue-green infrastructure. From the residents, the City of Espoo learnt from their perspectives and ways of using public greenspaces to improve health. As ULG III events, a park walk for senior citizens was organised. The perspectives and activities of the NGOs and communities were compiled through two workshops.

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## Small Scale Action: Health nature trail Design Guide

As a Small-Scale Action, Espoo elaborated a Design Guide on planning and implementing a health nature trail through a co-design-oriented process. The guidelines of the booklet are based on the Olari health nature trail in Olari and its establishment. The booklet acts as a guideline on cross-departmental and participatory collaboration in planning a nature trail that introduces the health benefits of nature. Olari health-nature trail was established by residents' association Olari-seura together with Espoo's own cross-administrative development programme Healthy Espoo in 2019. The Design Guide has been published in three languages — Finnish, Swedish and English.

In addition to the booklet, images, interactive maps and a video were also produced as communication material. A marketing campaign was targeted at other public administrations, residents of Espoo and other local stakeholders to start their

own planning process for establishing a health nature trail. The aim is that, with the help of the booklet, NGOs in Espoo will participate actively in the planning and maintenance of nature facilities, and other cities will be more eager and able to begin such projects together with their active NGOs. Further objectives and the continuation of the Small Scale Action will be integrated into action 2.7.

The elaboration of the booklet piloted new ways to communicate about already implemented experiments in Espoo, both inside the city organisation and with other cities. The action demonstrated how clear, step-by-step guidelines create motivation to promote measures to increase the health benefits of already existing greenspaces and ecosystem services.

**Read more:**

[www.espoo.fi/en/olari-health-nature-trail](http://www.espoo.fi/en/olari-health-nature-trail)

## 3.2. Framework for delivery and monitoring implementation

After the end of the Health&Greenspace project, lead agencies are responsible for carrying out individual actions. The new internal expert network follows the implementation and results of the actions. Therefore, **the operational framework** for the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan has been ensured by continuing cooperation and information-based decision-making processes that already started during the Health&Greenspace project.

**Organisational commitment** has started in the process of composing the Integrated Action Plan and it will continue through the implementation of individual actions. Through Urban Local Group I, information and experiences of the connection of health and greenspaces has been shared with all key departments related to green area maintenance, urban planning and healthcare. In the Growth and Learning Sector and Health and Well-being Sector, the sector management has also been familiarised with the Integrated Action Plan. These all ensure that

lessons, practices and experiences from the project will be further incorporated into existing expert networks, steering groups and cross-departmental development programmes. Through this exchange of information, the Integrated Action Plan will be implemented both among the directors and at grassroots level.

**Political commitment** to the Integrated Action Plan is being gained in two ways. Firstly, the actions are strongly linked to existing practices, the Espoo Story and the strategies of individual departments. This ensures that the Integrated Action Plan is true to the general strategic objectives of the whole city. The practices and strategies are all determined by the councils, and therefore many of the actions already have a strong political commitment. Secondly, the Integrated Action Plan will be presented and discussed in the political decision-making processes of the city. These include the Technical Services Committee, Environment and Building Control Committee and Sports and Exercise Committee. This is a practical and influential way to commit the new politicians of the council season 2021–2025 to concrete actions.

### Schedule for implementation

The target year for implementing the whole Integrated Action Plan is 2030. Between 2022 and 2030, the actions will be executed in three different timescales from short- to medium- and long-term actions. More detailed planning of all the actions will already start at the end of the

Health&Greenspace project. The results and potential for continuing the activities will be evaluated and assessed in the targeted year at the latest. Rough estimates of the timeline for the coming years is described below.



The schedule and target years for implementation of the Integrated Action Plan. The implementation of each action will already begin at the end of the projects, regardless of their target year.

## External funding and resources

Once the Integrated Action Plan is complete, each lead agency will have defined for themselves financing methods and resources for implementing the actions. Most of the actions need no external funding or can be covered with existing resources. In the Integrated Action Plan, there are two actions which require external resources for their full implementation:

### **1.6. Implementation of urban walk routes with a focus in local nature** (Environment and Building Control Department)

Current resources do not enable the implementation of new urban walk routes. Therefore, the implementation of the action will start by surveying potential funding schemes. The action also includes activation of NGOs in implementing new urban walk routes, which does not require extra resources from the city.

### **3.7. Renewal of the survey on local forests next-door to schools and day-cares** (Urban Planning Department)

Renewal of the survey requires an external project coordinator. The action will be integrated into larger projects, which will apply for funding in 2022-2023.

From the actions that need external funding, the lead agency is responsible for evaluating suitable funding schemes and for applying funding. In most cases, the action can be included in other funding applications or integrated into larger projects.

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## Risk assessment

Successful implementation of the Integrated Action Plan is ensured by minimising risks. Risk assessment was conducted by the Urban Local Group I network by evaluating what kind of challenges each dimension of integrated urban development may face. During the process, the following risks were recognised:

### **Horizontal integration**

Health and the blue-green infrastructure have not been previously linked together in local policy, and the new approach need to be integrated into the existing policy framework. New procedures, perspectives, activities and ways to cooperate must be gradually integrated into the daily work through active participation by the members of the new green well-being network.

In a vast city organisation, a feeling of ownership and commitment by necessary stakeholders need to be ensured. New practices and channels for communication will help the new expert network to continue the process and implement the actions. Implementation of the Integrated Action Plan is also at risk if the start and continuation of the new green well-being network fail. Situations where an employee leaves the organisation and fails to share necessary information and networks with the next employee also cause a risk to the continuity of the process.

Municipal politics in Finland is run in four-year cycles and both the local politicians and the strategy of the city change seasonally. When the implementation of some of the actions stretch over several council seasons, political approval needs to be obtained from the new decision-makers as well, even if the Integrated Action Plan was not approved by them per se. The challenge is tackled by obtaining commitment from the presiding committees and ensuring the resources and timeframe are already set for the rest of the implementation period. Both organizational and political commitment are also achieved by successful implementation of the first phase of the actions, which ensures that the benefits and influence of the actions are made visible.

### **Territorial integration**

From 2023 on, social and health services and rescue services will be provided by the Western Uusimaa well-being county, which will take these responsibilities from the municipalities. The national reform means health care services will no longer be provided by the municipality, which may have an influence on the planned actions and future cooperation between the different sectors. The green well-being network will follow the reform and make necessary amendments to the assembly and/or format of the network to be able to include social and well-being perspectives in the cooperative body.

### **Vertical integration**

The Integrated Action Plan has no straight connections to higher levels of governance, such as international, national or regional governmental bodies. Risks to cooperation with local stakeholders are caused by failure to implement the next steps of the following green well-being network. In Espoo, the Integrated Action Plan has been conducted mainly within the city organisation and also with the aim of expanding the scope of perspectives later to the NGOs, residents and other local stakeholders. This involvement of other stakeholders may fail due to, for example, lack of time resources for ensuring participation. A plan for integrating other stakeholders into discussion on the health-responsive urban environment will be conducted by the green well-being network as one of the very first actions of the network.

### **Resources integration**

Even if most of the actions require no external funding, scarce time resources of the municipal incumbents may cause a risk to implementation of the Integrated Action Plan. Also, the economic situation of the municipality may vary annually. This challenge will be tackled by ensuring that the participants are committed to the green well-being network and implementation of the actions. Therefore, they also argue for using their time and other resources for implementing the planned actions.

# Appendices

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# Appendix 1

Studies and surveys on the blue-green infrastructure in Espoo and health of Espoo's residents

## Lyhenteet:

<b>EnvD</b>	the Environment Department (currently the Environment and Building Control Department)
<b>CitPD</b>	Urban Planning Department
<b>MayO</b>	Mayor's Office
<b>PWD</b>	Public Works Department
<b>EldS</b>	Elderly Services
<b>SpED</b>	Sports and Exercise Unit
<b>EEdu</b>	Early Childhood Education Unit

Nimi suomeksi Name in Finnish	Nimi englanniksi Name in English	Julkaisija Publisher	Julkaisu- vuosi Year of publication
<b>Viheralueiden käyttö</b> Use of greenspaces and recreational areas			
Tärkeät lähimetsät - Espoon koulu- ja päiväkotimetsäselvitys 2013	Urban forests next-door to schools and day-cares	EnvD	2014
Espoon luontopolkuseelvitys	State of natural trails in Espoo	EnvD	2014
Viheralueohjelma 2014-2028, joka koostuu seuraavista:  Leikkipaikkaohjelma 2016-2026 (päivitetty 2019) Espoon metsien ja niittyjen hoidon toimintamalli Espoon koira-aitausohjelma 2018-2028 Lähiliikuntapaikka-ohjelma 2019-2029 Skeittipaikkaohjelma 2014-2024 (päivitetty 2018) Kaupunkiviljelyohjelma 2018-2027 Espoon niittyjen ja avointen alueiden toimenpideohjelma 2020-2031 Pyöräilyn edistämishjelma 2013-2024 Hulevesiohjelma 2020	Green area programme 2014-2028, which consists of the following:  Playground programme 2016-2026 (updated 2019) Principles for forest and meadow maintenance Dog park programme 2018-2028 Neighbourhood sports area programme 2019-2029 Skate park programme 2014-2024 (updated 2018) Urban gardening programme 2018-2027 Action plan for meadows and open areas 2021-2031 Action plan for promoting cycling 2013-2024 Stormwater programme 2020	PWD, EnvD, CitPD, SpED, EEdu, among others	2014 >
Luontoliikuntaohjelma	Nature Exercising programme	SpED	2021

## Ulkoilureitit ja liikenne

### Recreational routes and transportation

Kotiseudun ulkoilupolut - ulkoilureittien yleissuunnitelma	General plan for recreational routes	SpED	2021
Liikennebarometri 2020	Transportation barometer 2020	CitPD	2020
Liikennekatsaus 2021	Transportation overview 2021	CitPD	2021

## Viheralueiden suunnittelu

### Green areas in urban planning

Alueelliset virkistysvisiot	Regional vision of recreational facilities	CitPD	
Viherkudelman, osa A: Luontohyödyt Espoon kaupunkirakenteessa - Espoon ekosysteempipalveluanalyysi	Spatial analysis on the Ecosystem Services in Espoo	CitPD	2018
Viherkudelman, osa B: Espoon siniviherrakenne - teemakohtainen tarkastelu 2019	Study of the blue-green infrastructure and usability of recreational areas	CitPD	2019
Viherkattovisio	Vision for vegetative roofs	CitPD	2020
Yleiskaavatasoinen kulttuuriympäristöselvitys	Study of the cultural environment network	CitPD	Valmisteilla (In the making)
Katupuulinjaus	General principles for the planning and maintenance of street trees	PWD	Valmisteilla (In the making)

## Ilmasto, ympäristö ja käyttäytyminen

### Climate, environment and behaviour

Espoolaisten ympäristöasenteet ja ympäristökäyttäytyminen	Study on the environmental attitudes of Espoo's residents	EnvD	2014
Espoon ympäristötavoitteet 2017-2021	Objectives for environmental conservation 2017-2021	EnvD	2016
Espoon ilmasto-ohjelma 2016-2021	Climate mitigation and adaptation programme 2016-2021	MayO	2016
Espoon kaupungin kestävän kehityksen arvio	Voluntary Local Review (VLR) - implementation of the United Nations' sustainable development goals 2030 in the City of Espoo	MayO	2020
Minun luontohyötyni - Asukaskysely luonnon merkityksestä espoolaisille: yhteenveto kyselyn tuloksista	Summary of responses to a resident questionnaire on the perceived personal significance of nature	CitPD	2020
Mun Espoo kartalla -kysely	My Espoo on a map survey	CitPD	2020

## Melu

### Noise pollution

Espoon hiljaisten alueiden selvitys	Survey on quiet places	EnvD	2016
Espoon ja Kauniaisten kaupunkien ympäristömeludirektiivin mukainen meluselvitys 2017	Report on noise measures in cities of Espoo and Kauniainen 2017	EnvD	2017
Meluntorjunnan toimintasuunnitelma (Espoon ja Kauniaisten kaupunkien ympäristömeludirektiivin mukainen meluntorjunnan toimintasuunnitelma 2018-2022)	Action plan for noise control measures in Espoo and Kauniainen	EnvD	2018

## Luonnonsuojelu

### Nature conservation

Espoon arvokkaat luontokohteet	Valuable nature sites in Espoo	EnvD	2013
Espoon perinneympäristöt	Meadows and historical biotopes in Espoo	EnvD	2014
Espoon ekologisen verkoston nykytila	Ecological corridors and the green area network in Espoo	EnvD	2014
Espoon suojeltujen luontotyyppien nykytila ja hoito-ohjeet	The state of Espoo's protected nature sites and guidelines for their maintenance	EnvD	2015
Luonnonsuojelun toimenpiteet 2021–2030 -ohjelma, joka koostuu seuraavista:  Espoon ekologisen verkoston nykytila -selvitys Espoon luonnon monimuotoisuuden toimenpideohjelma ja selvitys Espoon käytännöt luonnon monimuotoisuuden edistämiseksi	Nature conservation measures in Espoo -programme, which consists of the following:  The state of the ecological network in Espoo Action plan and survey on nature conservation measures in Espoo Espoo's practices for promoting biodiversity	EnvD	2017-2021
Espoon vesistöjen tila ja vesiensuojelu	State of Espoo's water systems and guidelines for their maintenance	EnvD	2014
Espoon virtavesikartoitus 2020–2021: kaupunkipurojen luonnon-tila ja muuntuneisuus	Ecological state of streams in Espoo 2020–2021	EnvD	2020–2021
Espoon pohjavesialueiden suojelusuunnitelma	Conservation plan for groundwater in Espoo	EnvD	2015
Hulevesiohjelma	Stormwater programme	CitPD	2020

## Terveys ja hyvinvointi

### Health and well-being

Toimintaympäristön tila Espoossa 2021 - Espoolaisten hyvinvointi	A study of the health and well-being of Espoo's residents	MayO	2021
Täyttä elämää ikääntyneenä - Suunnitelma Espoon ikääntyneen väestön hyvinvoinnin tukemiseksi 2016–2021	Action plan for supporting the health and well-being of the elderly 2016-2021	cross-departmental work, EldS	2016, uusi valmisteilla (New in the making)
Työikäisten hyvinvointisuunnitelma 2017–2021	Action plan for supporting the health and well-being of the working age population 2017-2021	cross-departmental work	2017, uusi valmisteilla (New in the making)
Lasten ja nuorten hyvinvointisuunnitelma vuosille 2017–2021	Action plan for supporting the health and well-being of the children and youth 2017-2021	cross-departmental work	2017, new in the making
Kotona asuvien vammaisten henkilöiden asumisen toiveet ja tarpeet - Yhteenveto selvitystyön tuloksista	Summary of responses to a questionnaire on the needs and aspirations of disabled people living at home	cross-departmental work	2014

## Muut selvitykset ja ohjelmat

Other surveys and programmes

Asunto-ohjelma 2018–2021	Housing programme 2018-2021	MayO	2018
Helsingin seudun vieraskielisen väestön ennuste 2013–2030	Forecast of the foreign population in the Helsinki Metropolitan Region 2013-2030	Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus/ Information centre of the City of Helsinki	2013

## Appendix 2

Additional references: examples of studies and surveys related to the health impacts of greenspaces

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## Health&Greenspace: Thematic Reports

**#1: Impacts of Green Spaces on Physical and Mental Health.** Eduarda Marques da Costa (Centro de Estudos Geográficos, Universidade de Lisboa) and Tamás Kállay (Lead Expert of the URBACT Health&Greenspace network). 2020. Available at <https://urbact.eu/files/thematic-report-physical-and-mental-health>

**#2: Impacts of urban green spaces on social and individual well-being.** Franca Beccaria (Eclectica, Institute for Research and Training, Torino) and Tamás Kállay (Lead Expert of the URBACT Health&Greenspace network). 2021. Available at <https://urbact.eu/files/healthgreenspace-thematic-report-impacts-urban-green-spaces-social-and-individual-well-being>

**#3: Urban Heat Stress and Cooling with Green Infrastructure.** Birgit Georgi (Strong cities in a changing climate, URBACT Ad-Hoc Expert) and Tamás Kállay (Lead Expert of the URBACT Health&Greenspace network). 2021. Available at <https://urbact.eu/files/healthgreenspace-thematic-report-urban-heat-stress-and-cooling-green-structure>

**#4: Using Urban Greenery to Improve Air Quality.** Tamás Kállay (Lead Expert of the URBACT Health&Greenspace network). 2022. Available at <https://urbact.eu/files/thematic-report-reducing-air-pollution-urban-greenery>

**#5: Street Greening for Health and Wellbeing Outcomes.** Lucia Vecchi (GMLV arquitectura del paisaje, URBACT Ad-Hoc Expert) and Tamás Kállay (Lead Expert of the URBACT Health&Greenspace network). 2022. Available at [https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/thematic\\_report\\_no5\\_street\\_greening\\_for\\_health\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_outcomes\\_healthgreenspace\\_0605\\_fn.pdf](https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/thematic_report_no5_street_greening_for_health_and_wellbeing_outcomes_healthgreenspace_0605_fn.pdf)

## Appendix 3

Other projects related to urban greenspaces and/or human health and well-being

### **GoGreenRoutes – Horizon 2020** (2020-2024): <https://gogreenroutes.eu>

The EU-funded GoGreenRoutes project's transdisciplinary consortium will pioneer a unique approach to nature-based solutions by creating green corridors and cultivating a positive human-nature relationship. Advancing mental health and well-being, the project's components will focus on nature-based enterprise, sustainable physical activity and digital, cultural and information innovation. An information ecosystem with urban communities will raise awareness about links between human and environmental health.

### **Healthy Cities – URBACT APN** (2017-2020): <https://urbact.eu/healthy-cities>

This Action Planning Network aims to deepen the relationship between health and the urban environment, planning actions that focus on improving the population's health, while developing a rigorous health impact assessment around it. Urban Planning can become a health generator on many grounds. This partnership reflects the multiplicity of possible approaches to tackle the issue: green areas, mobility, social cohesion or promotion of sports are some examples.

### **Cool Towns – Interreg 2 Seas** (2018–2022): <https://www.cooltowns.eu/>

Cool Towns is a cooperation between 14 European partners aimed at counteracting the negative effects of climate change and finding attractive solutions that make cities climate-proof and robust so that heat stress is prevented or limited as much as possible. The project brings together leading European research/academic institutions, governmental organisations and industries from the climatology and climate change adaptation domains.

### **Space4People – URBACT APN** (2017-2020): <https://urbact.eu/space4people>

Space4People deals with public space use in our cities working with its main use function: transport. Our focus is on walkability, quality of life, mix of functions and interchanges and parking management to achieve attractive public space for diverse user groups and a sustainable urban mobility scheme supporting such public spaces. Space4People takes a user-centric approach assessing qualities and deficiencies, developing future visions and testing possible solutions to public space in our cities.

### **Green Surge – FP7** (2013-2017): <https://greensurge.eu/>

The GREEN SURGE project is a collaborative project between 24 partners in 11 countries. It is funded by the European Commission Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). GREEN SURGE will identify, develop and test ways of linking green spaces, biodiversity, people and the green economy in order to meet the major urban challenges related to land use conflicts, climate change adaptation, demographic changes, and human health and well-being.

### **Vital Cities – URBACT APN** (2016-2018): <https://urbact.eu/vital-cities>

Seeking answers on how to combat social exclusion through the redesign of public spaces in deprived residential areas by using the power and common language of sport, this Action Planning network found solutions through innovative urban sport actions, physical equipment and better orchestrated service delivery. Active living positively contributes to social cohesion, well-being and economic prosperity in cities.

### **iSCAPE (Improving the Smart Control of Air Pollution in Europe) (2016-2019):**

<https://www.iscapeproject.eu/>

This European research and innovation project worked on integrating and advancing the control of air quality and carbon emissions in European cities in the context of climate change through the development of sustainable and passive air pollution remediation strategies, policy interventions and behavioural change initiatives. iSCAPE has received funding from the European Community's H2020 Programme.

### **RECETAS (Re-imagining Environments for Connection and Engagement: Testing Actions for Social Prescribing in Natural Spaces) – Horizon 2020 (2021-2026):**

<https://recetasproject.eu/>

RECETAS is a €5 million EU-funded project comprising 13 institutions from nine different countries. The project uses multidisciplinary approaches to implement Nature Based Social Prescribing (NBSP). It carries out three observational studies and three randomised controlled trials in six cities worldwide: Barcelona, Marseille, Prague, Helsinki, Cuenca (Ecuador) and Melbourne. RECETAS is grounded in participatory principles and explores loneliness through a transdisciplinary lens, integrating social, behavioural, health, and natural sciences.

### **URCLIM: <http://urclim.prod.lamp.cnrs.fr/>**

In URCLIM, the idea is to communicate climate information in a way it is scientifically sound and easily understood. The project aims at realising integrated Urban Climate Services (UCS), which will be of interest to urban planners and related stakeholders, to respond to user needs, but also to provide assistance in decision-making.

### **HERCULES: <https://sites.utu.fi/hercules/>**

The overall aim of HERCULES is to provide ground-breaking, yet feasible information about climate-related health risks. We hypothesise that certain environmental and socio-economic parameters have an impact on the health of the individual. Data on these parameters are analysed together with cohort health data on several time-steps, allowing us to draw conclusions about their connections. Our analyses cover the whole of Finland, while the focus area consists of the six largest cities in Finland.

### **CHAMPS - Climate change and Health: Adapting to Mental, Physical and Societal challenges: <https://thl.fi/en/web/thlfi-en/research-and-development/research-and-projects/climate-change-and-health-adapting-to-mental-physical-and-societal-challenges-champs->**

The research consortium CHAMPS studies the potential impacts of climate change on health, with a focus on three interrelated topics: 1) mental health impacts associated with seasonal fluctuations in the intensity of daylight and modifying weather effects such as cloudiness and snow cover. 2) health impacts of thermal stress, both heat and cold, and the influence of social vulnerability and exposure of the population to the severity of impacts. 3) the implications of these varied health impacts on occupational health and work productivity. CHAMPS is coordinated by the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (THL) and is funded through the Academy of Finland's Climate Change and Health (CLIHE) programme.

## Appendix 4

Stakeholders, which were involved in composing the Integrated Action Plan in Espoo

**Urban Local Group I – verkoston jäsenet löytyvät kaaviosta sivulta 15.**

### Urban Local Group II

ADELE - Autoimmune Defense and Living Environment -tutkimushanke (Vallipuiston päiväkotivierailu)

APN Healthy Cities –hanke (Health Impact Assessment -työpaja)

KOTA – Kohti Tervettä aikuisuutta -tutkimushanke (Vallipuiston päiväkotivierailu)

Metsähallitus (Luonto liikuttaa – vai liikuttaako? -webinaari)

Oulun yliopisto (Luonto liikuttaa – vai liikuttaako? -webinaari)

Päijät-Hämeen hyvinvointikuntayhtymä (Hyvinvointia luonnosta -webinaari)

Suomen ympäristökeskus SYKE (Hyvinvointia luonnosta -webinaari)

Valtion liikuntaneuvosto (Luonto liikuttaa – vai liikuttaako? -webinaari)

### Urban Local Group III

Elävä Espoo ry (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Espoon mielenterveysyhdistys ry (työpaja ja luontoretki)

Espoon monikulttuuriset lapset ja nuoret ry (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Espoon palstakontaktiverkosto (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Espoon Suunta (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Jade yhteisö - Ikääntyvien vieraskielisten yhdistys (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Kauklahti-seura (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Lähiluonto ry (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Lähiöpride-tutkimushanke (Senioreiden puistokävely Matinkylässä)

Matinkylä-seura (Senioreiden puistokävely Matinkylässä)

Olarin Martat (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

OmaKamu ry (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

Suomen Nivelyhdistys ry (Ulkona luonnostaan -työpaja)

**Members of the Urban Local Group I are described in a graph on page 15.**

### Urban Local Group II

ADELE - Autoimmune Defense and Living Environment research group (Visit to Vallipuisto day-care centre)

APN Healthy Cities project (Health Impact Assessment workshop)

KOTA – Kohti Tervettä aikuisuutta research group (Visit to Vallipuisto day-care centre)

Metsähallitus (state-owned forestry company) (webinar on physical activity in greenspaces)

University of Oulu (webinar on physical activity in greenspaces)

The Centre of Excellence on Social Welfare in Päijät-Häme (webinar on health benefits of greenspaces)

Finnish Environment Institute SYKE (webinar on health benefits of greenspaces)

National Sports Council (webinar on physical activity in greenspaces)

### Urban Local Group III

Elävä Espoo art collective (workshop for NGO´s)

Espoo Association for Mental Health (workshop and a nature excursion)

Multicultural children and youth in Espoo (workshop for NGO´s)

Allotment garden community in Espoo (workshop for NGO´s)

Espoon Suunta orienteering club (workshop for NGO´s)

Jade community for multicultural seniors (workshop for NGO´s)

Kauklahti residents´ association (workshop for NGO´s)

Lähiluonto Outdoor Association (workshop for NGO´s)

Lähiöpride research group (Park walk for senior citizens)

Matinkylä residents´ association (Park walk for senior citizens)

Olarin Martat - Martha home economics organization (workshop for NGO´s)

OmaKamu volunteer friend association (workshop for NGO´s)

Finnish Osteoarthritis Association (workshop for NGO´s)



**ENVIRONMENT AND BUILDING CONTROL  
DEPARTMENT 2022**

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