

CATEGORY: LANDSCAPES FOR HEALTH: URBAN GREEN SPACES

Urban Green Spaces

Urban green space (UGS) is often, but not always, comprised of plants and other natural elements in a human-dominated area. Other related terms, sometimes used interchangeably, can include green infrastructure, urban vegetation, streetscapes, remnant patches, and urban parks. Despite there not being a formal operational definition for urban green space, there has been growing interest in greenspace research as evidence that nature positively impacts human wellbeing grows. Urban green space can encourage increased physical activity, increase social and community connection, and enhance nature connectedness. It is now considered to be a factor impacting human health in many capacities including physiological and psychological wellbeing (Ai et al., 2025; Heród et al., 2025), prevention of cardiometabolic diseases (Astell-Burt & Xiaoqi, 2020), depression (Browning et al., 2019; Tanigaiselvane, 2025), morbidity (de Vries et al., 2025), and cognitive decline (Gan et al., 2025).

Research topics are diverse, investigating where and how urban green spaces impact human health. These include biophilic cities movement, restorative benefits of sky gardens (Li & Du, 2024), effects of trail and greenspace exposure on hospitalizations (Simon-Friedt et al., 2022), role of biodiversity (Spotswood et al., 2025) and integrating child-friendly green spaces into post-disaster recovery (Anwar & Selim, 2025).

Related topics have been included in category Landscapes for Health subset designed landscape elements.

Key Organizations

[Biophilic Cities.org](#)

[Green Cities: Good Health](#)

[The Conservation Fund](#)

[Urban Greenspaces Institute](#)

Books, journals & epublications on urban green spaces

[Biophilic Cities Journal](#)

Jennings, V., Browning, MHEM., & Rigolon, A. (2019). *Urban green spaces: Public health and sustainability in the United States*. Springer International Publishing.

Luo, L., Liu, X., & Jinag, B. (2025). *Healthy landscapes: Theory and design approaches to promote health in urban communities*. Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc.

Trojanowska, M. (2025). *Therapeutic landscape research evidence in eco-neighbourhood design*. Routledge.

[Urban Forestry & Urban Greening journal](#)

World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. (2016). [Urban green spaces and health: Interventions impacts and effectiveness.](#)

Research & articles on urban green spaces

Recently published selected research & articles:

Ai, L., Wang, H., Feng, Y. (2025). The healing power of *Camellia japonica* L.: How flower types

- influence urban residents' physiological and psychological wellbeing. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16. American Society of Landscape Architects. (2025). [The neighborhood climate park](#). ASLA.org.
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Examples of urban green spaces

Atlanta Beltline inhabits an old railroad corridor encircling the city's downtown connecting 45 neighborhoods and parks.

<https://beltline.org/>

Brooklyn Bridge Park has 85 acres of waterfront property with active and passive opportunities for the public + an Environmental Education Center that 10,000 students visit each year.

<https://brooklynbridgepark.org/>

[Dorothea Dix Park](#), Raleigh, North Carolina, sits on downtown land previously used for a State Mental Health Hospital, and is now being transformed into a large urban park.

[Kirby Lane Park, Baltimore](#) was previously a dumping ground for garbage until it was part of Nature Sacred funding and restoration as a community gathering space and urban green space.

Klyde Warren Park with its 5 acres over an eight-lane highway in Dallas TX supports movement of pedestrians and cyclists between parts of the city.

<https://www.klydewarrenpark.org/>

Lowline development of former Williamsburg Bridge Trolley Terminal will use cutting edge solar technology to create an underground green space. On pause now but watch for more upcoming.

<https://www.archpaper.com/2020/02/the-lowline-flatlines/>

Millenium Park and its bean shiny sculpture in Chicago was designed by Frank Gehry from an industrial wasteland, now a 5-acre perennial garden, world's largest green roof and concert venue.

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/millennium_park.html

Park Board of City of Vancouver, Canada achieves target to plant 150,000 trees by 2020 and directs staff to increase tree canopy to 30% by 2050.

<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2025-urban-forest-strategy.pdf>

Railroad Park in Birmingham, Alabama has integrated the industrial sites of the city into green space using bio-filtration wetlands, Birmingham History Wall and more.

<https://www.railroadpark.org/>

The High Line in NTC designed by Piet Oudolf utilizes a former railroad line, now with a native and low maintenance pathway and garden right downtown with a focus on sustainability and stormwater attributes.

<https://www.thehighline.org/>

[The Spine Liverpool](#), the Royal College of Physicians' new headquarters, used architecture with biophilia and salutogenics attributes referencing the human body, factoring in the importance of natural light, landscape views from inside, sky gardens, and a forest canopy.

Videos, webinars & websites on urban green spaces

6 *Examples of Green Spaces in Cities* article by ACD Consulting Services identifies urban parks, green roofs, landscaping around buildings, community woodlands and wetlands as impactful.

<https://www.acbconsultingservices.com/sustainable-construction-project-management/6-examples-of-green-spaces-in-cities/>

Green City Times online magazine focuses on green spaces, renewable energy, and ways humans interact with environments offering mutually beneficial living space. Article [10 Ways to Create Green Spaces for Urban Environments](#) makes practical suggestions.

<https://www.greencitytimes.com/10-ways-to-create-green-spaces/>

Smithsonian webinar series includes one “Helping Communities Gain Access to Green Spaces” with an intentional focus on more accessible and equitable access addressing mental health and socialization.

<https://gardens.si.edu/lets-talk-gardens/helping-communities-gain-access-to-green-spaces/>

UNICEF *for every child* website demonstrates the necessity of urban green space for children’s optimal development touching on all health domains.

<https://www.unicef.org/armenia/en/stories/necessity-urban-green-space-childrens-optimal-development>

Urban Green Space: Combining Goals for Sustainability and Placemaking research on *Europe Now* website discusses current approaches to this topic.

<https://www.europenowjournal.org/2021/05/10/urban-green-spaces-combining-goals-for-sustainability-and-placemaking/>

Related organizations

[Discovery Green Conservancy](#), Houston TX

[LAND studio](#), Cleveland OH

[Project for Public Space](#) NY, NY

[United States Environmental Protection Agency: Green Streets and Community Open Space](#)

Written & compiled by Lesley Fleming, Leah Diehl, Bree Stark in Dec. 2023. Revised in 2026 by Lesley Fleming, Joanna Brown.