



WEF: Future Cities Must Be Sustainable To Be 'Smart'

The elitist World Economic Forum is 100% behind Sustainable Development, aka Technocracy, claiming that the future Smart City should be 'first and foremost a sustainable city to minimize its environmental impact.' □ TN Editor

And since biodiversity is a reasonable indicator of the overall health of an ecosystem, we should try to optimize it. In consequence we might improve the health of the inhabitants and liveability of urban environments.

Ecologists bemoan the fact that urban environments are often left out of biodiversity studies - and that urban environments lack true biodiversity, period, due to the lack of spaces undisturbed by humans, the lack of corridors between green patches and the overall level of pollution.

How can cities of the future transform themselves to be more

sustainable, healthier and biodiverse? Here are a few ideas.

A proposal for tomorrow's cities

The goal of cities of the future should be to create a variety of undisturbed land-based and aquatic biotopes within urban environments, connected by corridors for animals to migrate and for seeds to spread. Green roofs, conventional parks, private gardens and green facades could create additional space for animals and plants to thrive.

Toronto is one example of a city that adapted development regulations according to this model, by passing the Green Roof Bylaw, which requires a certain ratio of green roofing for new developments above a certain size.

Toronto also offers subsidies for building owners willing to create green roofs with their Eco-Roof Incentive Program, something other cities should mimic; and some already do. While not all municipalities can create a costly incentive program like Toronto, they could, for example, reduce the mowing of public grasslands, sidewalks and other areas, which would improve living conditions for bees and other species. An even eco-friendlier policy might be to use animals for grazing these grasslands, providing natural fertilization and means of local food production. In Munich, one of Germany's largest cities, a flock of sheep is using Englischer Garten, one of the largest urban public parks, as pasture, which could be model for other public parks.

Municipalities could also declare a certain part of their forests as protected areas or plant biodiverse forests with native trees, creating new biotopes. The same should be considered for certain ponds, lakes and creeks that should be situated in a perimeter prohibiting conventional agriculture, fostering eutrophication of close-by aquatic environments.

Such environmental strategies for future city development should be embedded into a strategic report accessible by all city stakeholders, providing explanations, guidelines and contact information for further

help. One model for other cities is Vancouver, which is currently implementing its Greenest City Action Plan, comprised of local food production, strategic tree planting in public and private spaces, improving microclimate, food security and biodiversity. Governments could provide additional incentives, like free access to endemic seeds via community seedbanks, garden design assistance and subsidies or property tax reductions for those making positive contributions to the environment on their private property.

Technology is key to quantifying biodiversity and understanding the evolution of urban ecosystems. Drone overflights feeding data into a wildlife-recognition model combined with geotagging could help us understand the evolution of the urban ecosystem. Sensors could analyse soil humidity, temperature and composition and monitor wildlife, informing strategic planning.

All cities should join together to create an open database so researchers across the globe can access data and provide insights to local communities. Based on this knowledge, cities could enhance their urban farming and gardening programs, increasing local organic food production and further improving the health of inhabitants. Such community food gardens also educate and inspire more sustainable behavior while providing many other benefits.

[Read full story here...](#)