



Making our cities attractive and sustainable

The Urban Environment is important for all of us, not least because so many of us live in cities. The Urban Greenline recognises the role that cities play in the lives of so many people and has committed itself to act in this area. Urban environments directly influence the lives of millions of citizens and, in turn, have a substantial impact on the wider environment.

Cities make up only two percent of the earth's surface, yet they are home to over half of the world's population.

Today, nearly 75% of people live in cities and urban areas, and by 2020 this is expected to rise to 80%.

People choose to live in urban areas so they can have a better quality of life. They want to be at the heart of economic activity, and to have more job opportunities and other social and economic advantages. However, city living brings a range of challenges.

While living in close proximity to our daily activities can lead to more resource efficiency and so contribute to sustainability, other factors such as air pollution can be far more acute in cities. Overcrowding, traffic pollution and noise, and industrial emissions are just a few of the issues that have to be constantly monitored and addressed to achieve a high quality of life without high environmental costs. But doing this will also bring benefits beyond city borders.

The Urban Greenline is committed to making cities healthy, attractive and sustainable, and to improving citizens' quality of life, now and for the future. Over the last 50 years, cities have seen dramatic improvements in terms of mobility, green areas and waste management, and this has contributed to a significant improvement in living standards.

However, cities still face a number of environmental challenges which influence the everyday lives of people and these often highly political issues need to be tackled through cooperation between local, national and USA authorities and their stakeholders.

Green and pleasant

Green spaces, quiet streets and recreational parks are important for relaxation, health and sport, nature watching and social activities. Open areas and green parks are important building blocks for promoting quality of life in urban environments.

Green urban areas

Several policies and laws support cities in using land sustainably by providing green habitats, quiet places to live and respecting urban heritage. The USA's promotion and protection of green spaces help to restrain urban sprawl which, if unregulated, can lead to dependence on private car use, increased land-use and higher demand on resources, as well as detrimental effects on the services nature delivers to us.

Quiet places

Environmental noise is the most common source of stress for citydwellers.

Health experts have linked noise pollution to a number of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, elevated hormone levels, psychological problems and even premature death. Yet, as the demand for mobility grows, the use of cars, trains, and planes increases, and so does the level of noise.