



Liikuntakaavoitus -

Physical activity in the context of land use planning

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Abstract

Health benefits gained from physical activity are well acknowledged. A great amount of our daily and recreational physical activities take place outdoors, in the built environment. Yet physical activity has been unrecognized in the Finnish Land Use and Building Act. Research in the field of land use planning combined with physical activity has been carried out in Oulu University since year 2003. From various case studies the team of researchers, including both master and PhD students and conducted by Professor Helka-Liisa Hentilä have accumulated background information on how to create physically activating environments. The information has been gathered to the project web page Liikuntakaavoitus.fi. It includes general recommendations for planning as a checklist, guidance for interactive planning processes, tangible "idea cards" with proposals and instructions for planning certain physically activating environments and both publications on the subject and links to other pages with similar objectives.

The focus of the project, since the past three years, has been in informing and educating the target groups; architects and land use planners, policy-makers and officials, association members and citizens interested in improving circumstances of physical activity as well as creating new content and updating the web page. Numerous workshops on the subject have been organized in Turku, Hämeenlinna, Espoo, Oulu to name a few. A shorter, so called breakfast seminar including a healthy morning snack and a brief bulletin has proven to work well in smaller cities and municipalities like Tuusula and Valkeakoski. In addition online distance education has been organized with the use of videoconference technology to give opportunities for residents living in sparsely inhabited areas to participate.

Altogether the different kind of educational occasions have reached hundreds of people acting in the field and the frequently updated web page thousands. The greatest challenge of the work has been bringing people from the different fields of operation together, creating genuine interaction and comprehension between them, resulting in solutions perceiving promotion of physically activating environments.

More information available (in Finnish) at www.liikuntakaavoitus.fi