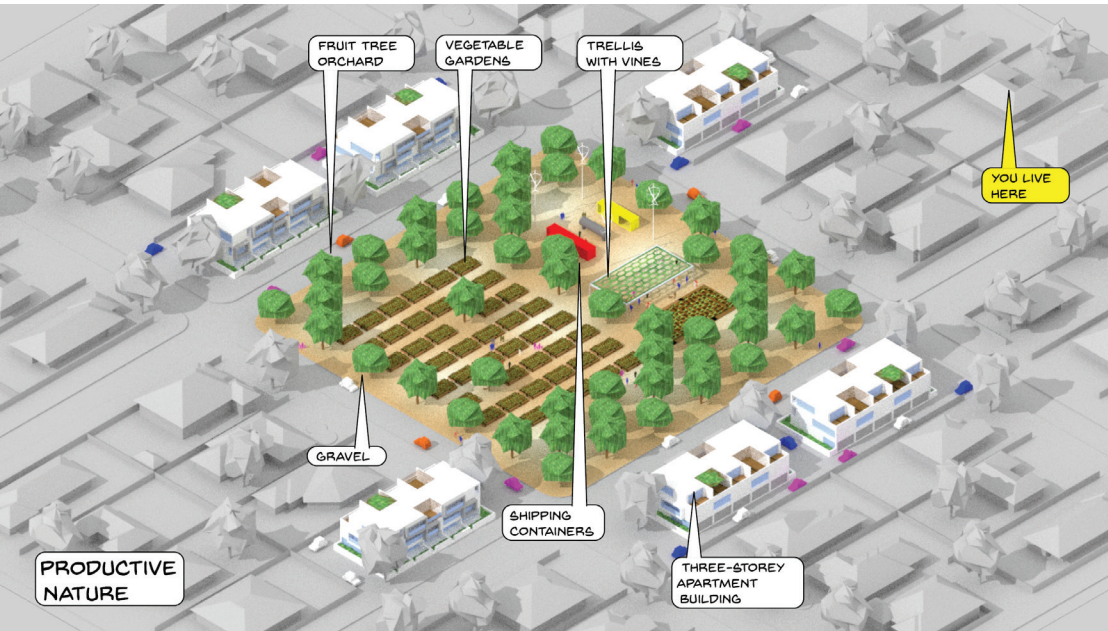


AUDRC Research Note

Natural Density



What type of natural experience should we provide in areas that are becoming increasingly built up?

Background

- Contact with nature is regarded as a universal requirement of urban areas. This is for good reason. Research into the health benefits of nature shows that even a brief time-out in a natural landscape can reduce the psychological toll of modern life.

- Despite the evident benefits of time in nature, as our cities sprawl and densify, contact with nature can become increasingly difficult. This situation is worrying because the state government anticipates that 800,000 new homes will be required to accommodate the projected population growth by 2050. Of this, 47% is planned for infill development (e.g., apartments) through redevelopment in existing urban areas.

- However, while increased infill development can protect natural areas on the city's edge, many communities resist urban densification, perceiving it as threatening the leafy greenness of their neighbourhoods. Indeed, the academic literature reminds us that strategies for urban densification should be coupled with policies to actively green built-up areas.

- However, this raises various questions. Firstly, what type of natural experience should we provide in parks in areas that are becoming increasingly built up? Moreover, could upgrading parks to provide particular natural landscapes lessen community resistance to urban densification?

Objectives

To address these gaps in our knowledge, this survey asks

respondents to evaluate options for upgrading a typical suburban park to provide different experiences of nature in the context of adjacent urban densification. These types of nature include:

- Pastoral nature, including a significant number of trees on the perimeter of the park, a meandering walking path shaded by fringing tree canopies, and a gently undulating lawn in the park's centre.

- Formal nature, including formal plantings of shady, exotic tree species; irrigated lawn areas and formal ornamental shrub plantings; a central ornamental water feature; and geometric paved pathways

- Wetland nature, incorporating a seasonal wetland that cleans and infiltrates stormwater collected from the surrounding streets, fringed with local wetland vegetation, encouraging fauna back to the area.

- Productive nature, incorporating fruit tree orchards and vegetable gardens irrigated with recycled water from the surrounding neighbourhood; trellis with vines and repurposed shipping containers for community use.

Contact

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