

In 2009, for the first time ever, the world's population became more urban than rural. By 2050, around two-thirds of all people will live in cities and urban populations will grow by more than 2 billion people. It is therefore imperative to ensure Cities are liveable and that everyone has access to large urban parks and open space.

The World Urban Parks association recognises that parks, open space and green infrastructure do have a unique and significant role in creating liveable cities and societies. It is recognized that in the next 40 years, urban population will double and therefore the challenge of Society to meet the growing pressure of modern urban development is immense. It is evident that parks, open space and green infrastructure are valued by people more than ever. The legacy of our forefathers since the beginning of city development parks, open space and green infrastructure have played a very special role.

Over the last twenty years, a number of Governments and individuals have been exploring the concept of national parks and cities. Generally, the discussion and the developments have mostly centred on the purity of the “national park” concept and have only seen limited progress of understanding of a National Park concept within a City. However, the Scandinavian countries and Canada have made definable progress in establishing “National Urban Parks” and there has been some (but limited) attempts to define what constitutes a “National Urban Park”.

*It is 145 years since the proclamation of the first National Parks when on March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park. This first National Park was established "as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people", so it is timely as the world becomes more urbanised and society losses connection with nature, that the next version of national parks is established – **THE NATIONAL PARK CITY.***

The World Urban Parks Association recognizes that parks, open space and green infrastructure provide significant roles in creating great cities and thus rethinking parks, open space and green infrastructure in Cities as the National Park City will achieve the following benefits:

CHILDREN

- Growing up in a National Park City would have a profound influence on our children. It will open up new opportunities for young people to be healthy, spend quality time with family, improve their outdoor education and grow up as creative citizens.

AGED COMMUNITIES

- Growing old in a National Park City would have a profound influence on our quality of life and reduced health costs. It will open up new opportunities for older people to be healthy, spend quality time with family, and to contribute to society as creative citizens.

HEALTH

- Actively enjoying quality green space improves our mental health, physical health and well-being. It not only saves money on the health services, but can also improve productivity in the workplace.

WEALTH

- A National Park City will inspire new kinds of business in the capital, but actively work to promote opportunities for recreation and

tourism in a city.

RECREATION

- A National Park City will create greater diversity and accessible landscape to explore. A National Park City would promote the city's long-distance footpaths, bike circuits, canoe trails and numerous other often forgotten opportunities to enjoy the open-air

ENVIRONMENT

- The National Park City will create a common vision for the city that all citizens will understand. Activities will lead to better management of the capital's green and blue

CALL TO ACTION

The English and European legacy of parks has a very distinct and long history that has shaped numerous cities and nations around the world. 2016 was the 300th Anniversary of an individual who has substantially shaped this legacy in a contemporary sense – Capability Brown, it is appropriate that London strives to be the first National Park City and establishes a way forward for others to follow.

This is a citizen led initiative to promote London's green spaces as a single system or entity - seeing this as one large urban park – Henrik Waldenstrom WWF (Sweden)

THE WORLD URBAN PARKS SUPPORT THE MAYOR OF LONDON IN HIS ENDEAVOURS TO ESTABLISH THE FIRST NATIONAL PARK CITY.

WE APPLAUD AND SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY FOUNDATION AND THEIR LEADERS.

THE WORLD URBAN PARKS CALLS UPON ALL CITY LEADERS AROUND THE WORLD TO TAKE ACTION AND CONSIDER THE NATIONAL PARK CITY APPROACH AS A MEANS TO CREATE MORE LIVEABLE AND CIVIL SOCIETIES

THE WORLD URBAN PARKS WILL:

- ***ENCOURAGE FURTHER DEBATE AND DISCUSSION ABOUT ADVANCING THIS CONCEPT***
- ***ATTEMPT TO EXPLORE AND ANSWER THE DEFINITION OF A NATIONAL PARK CITY***
- ***ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A MODERN FRAMEWORK TO ADVANCE THE CONCEPT OF “NATIONAL PARK CITIES”***

World Urban Parks champions urban park outcomes for city liveability, place-making, conservation and access, and provides strong membership services by connecting, leveraging and supporting diverse memberships across the international urban parks, open space and recreation community and allied sectors.

Vision - *A World where people value and have easy access to quality urban parks, open space and recreation*

<http://worldurbanparks.org/en/>

The views expressed in this statement reflect the views of World Urban Parks and should not be taken to represent all our members or of any organization with which they are affiliated with.

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